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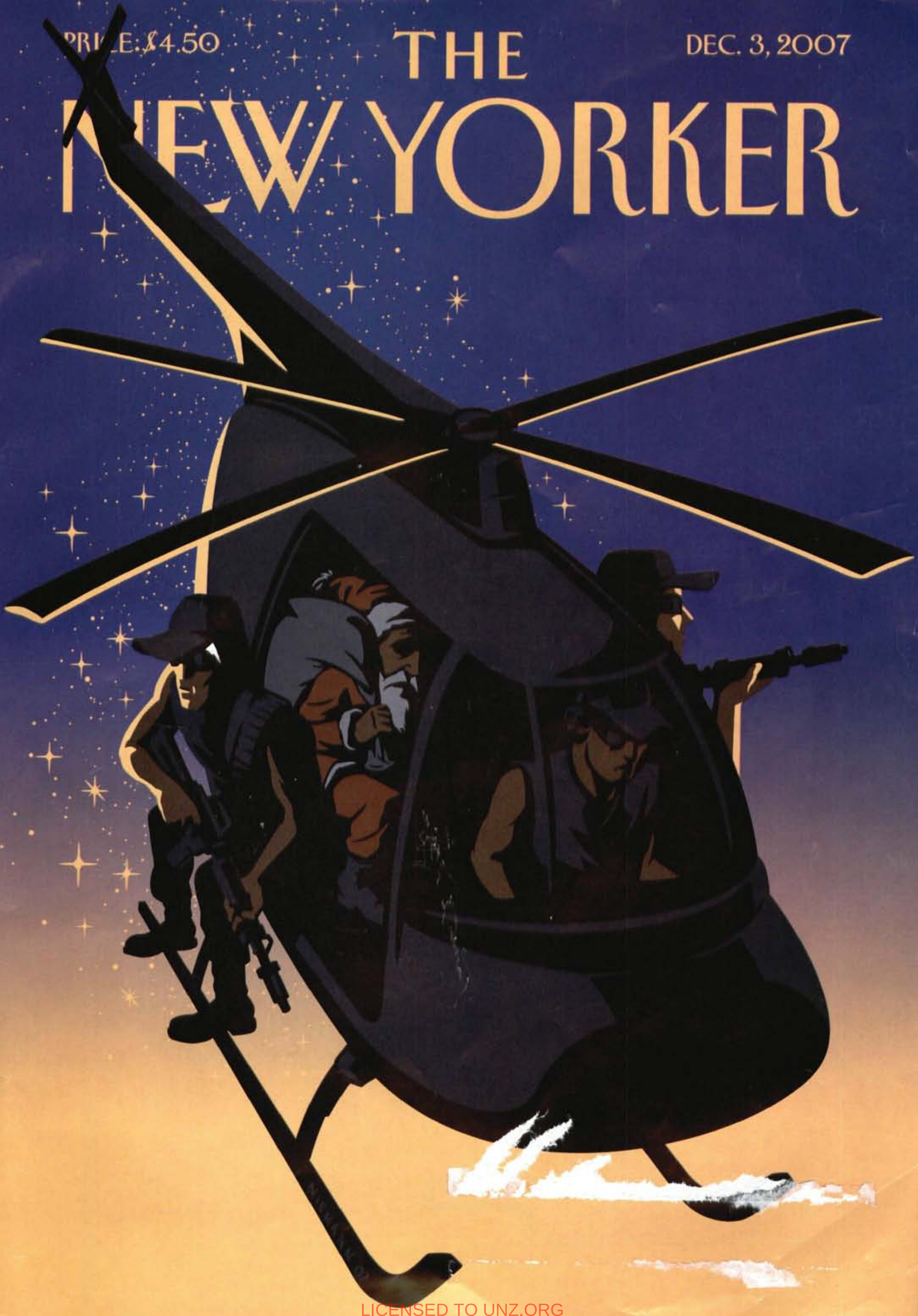

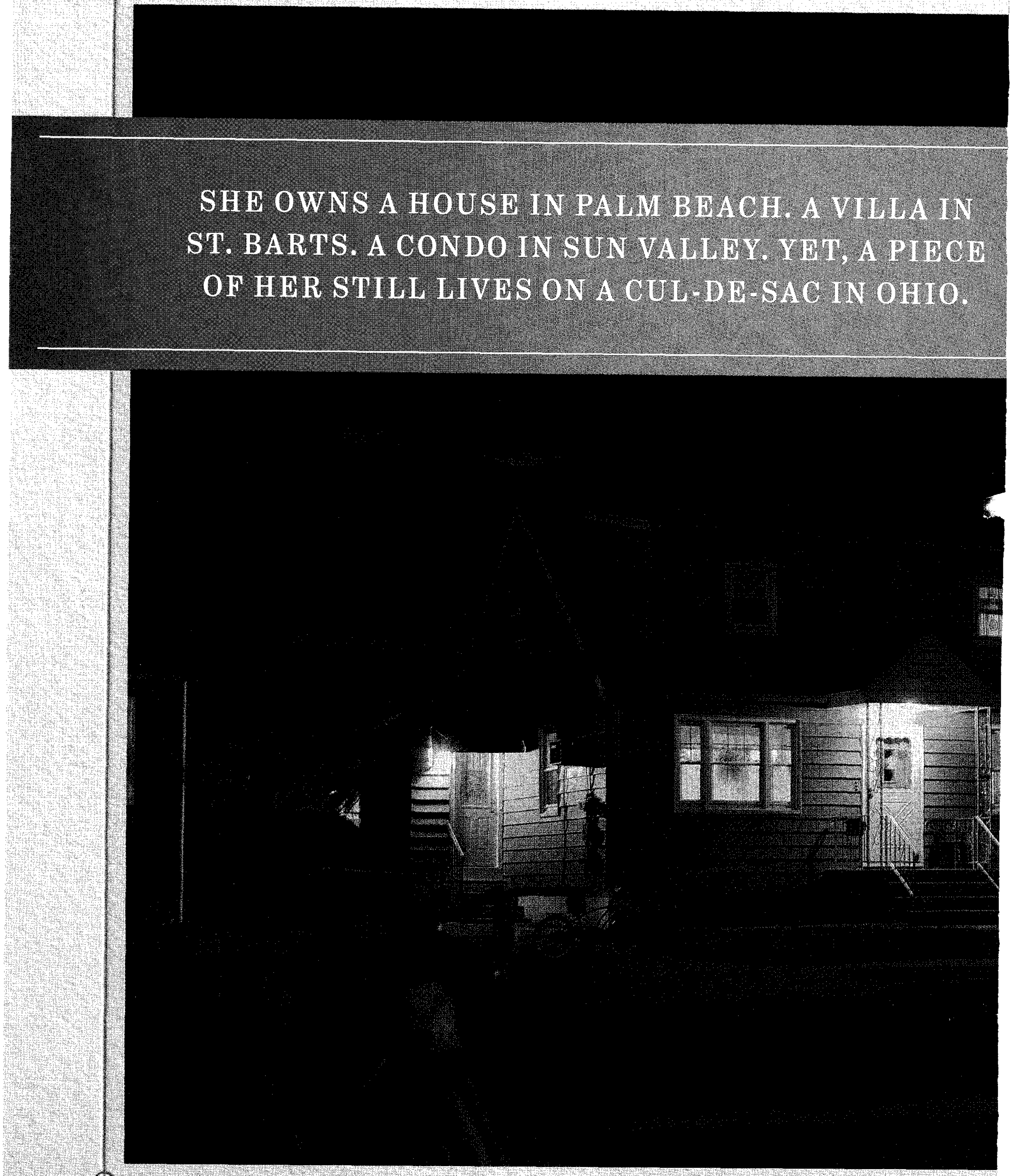
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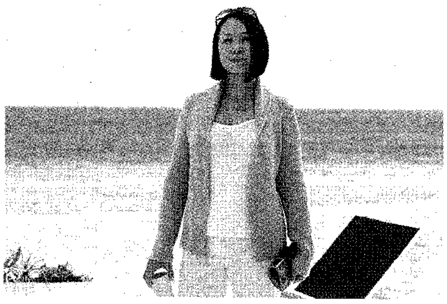

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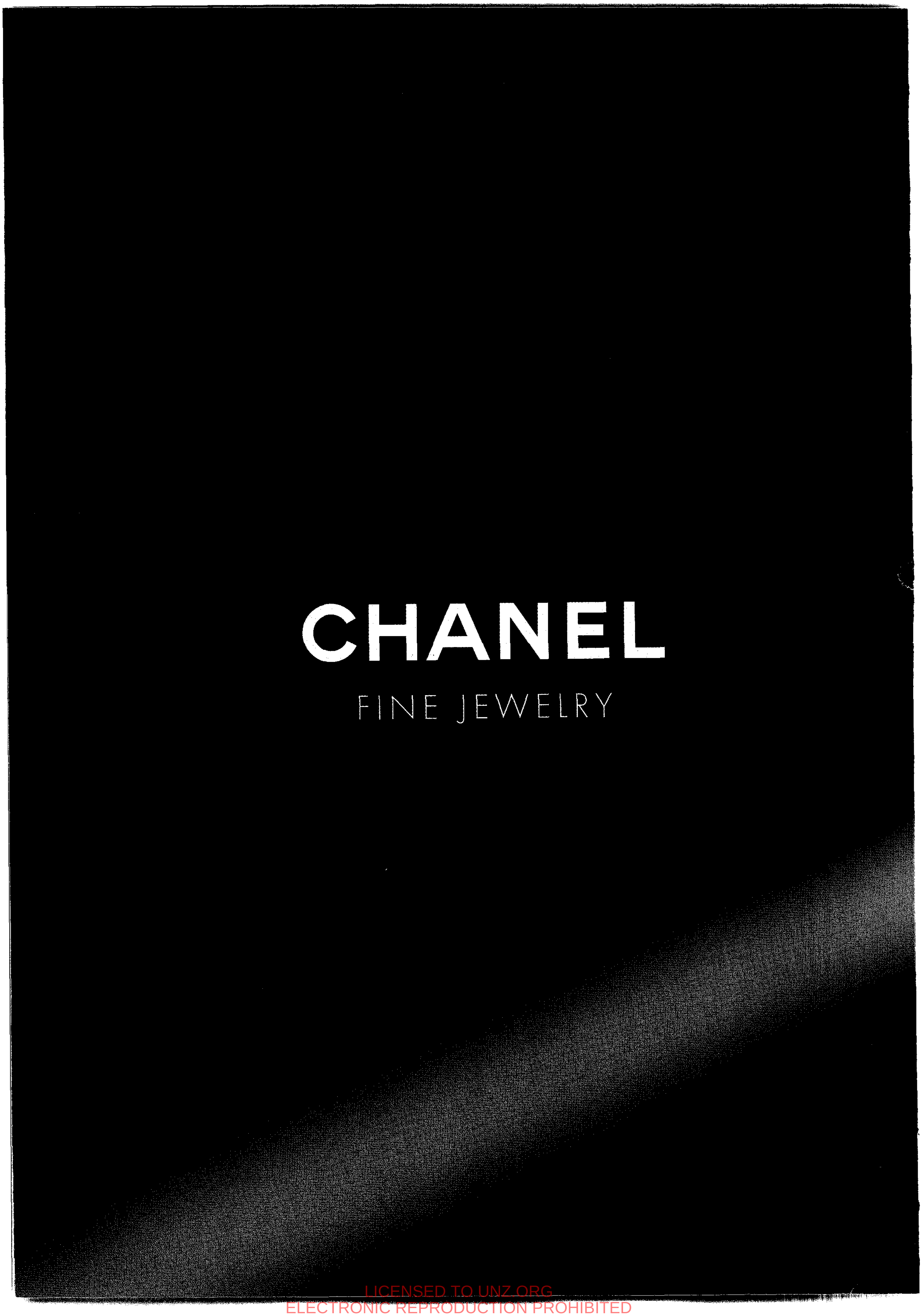

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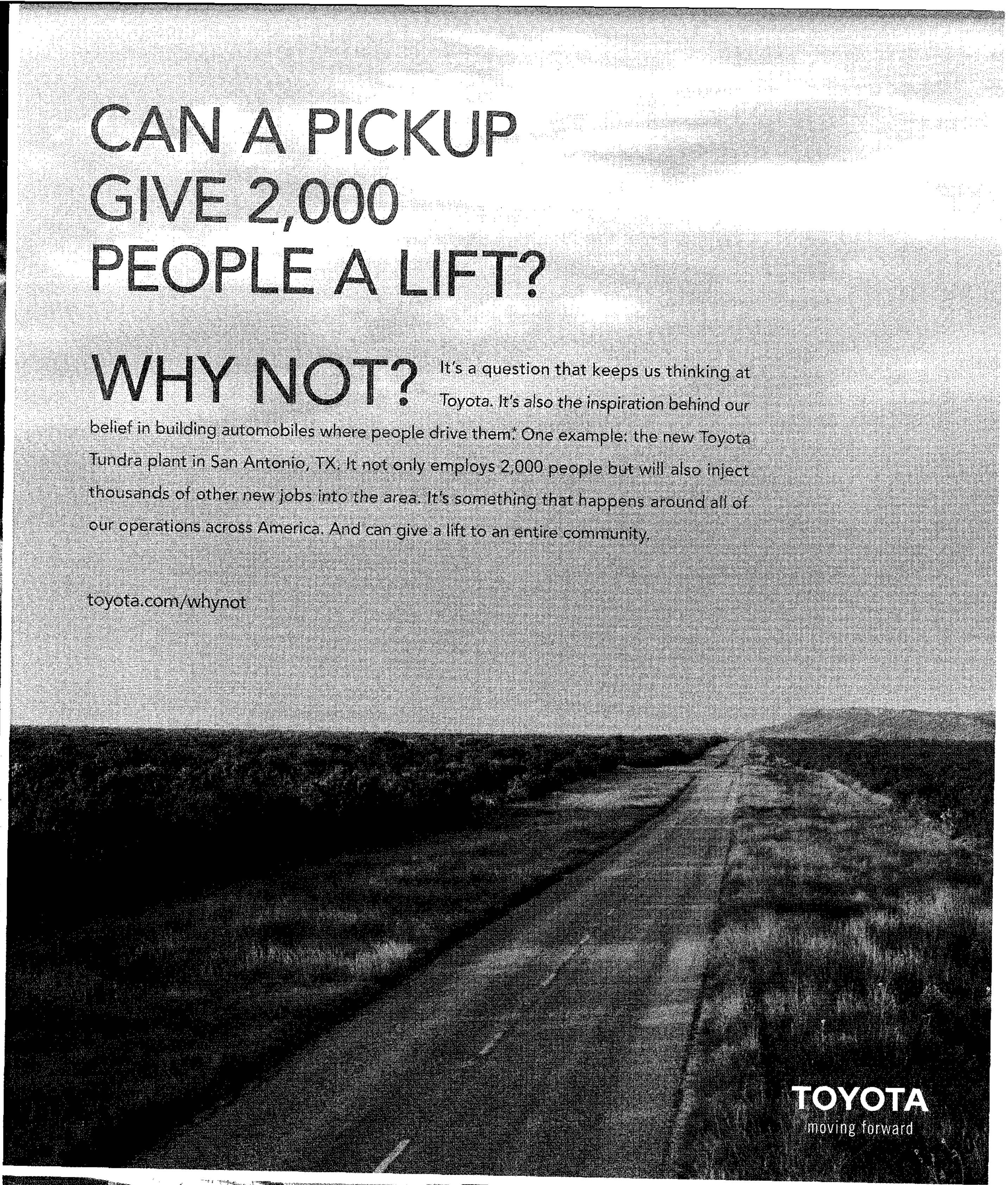

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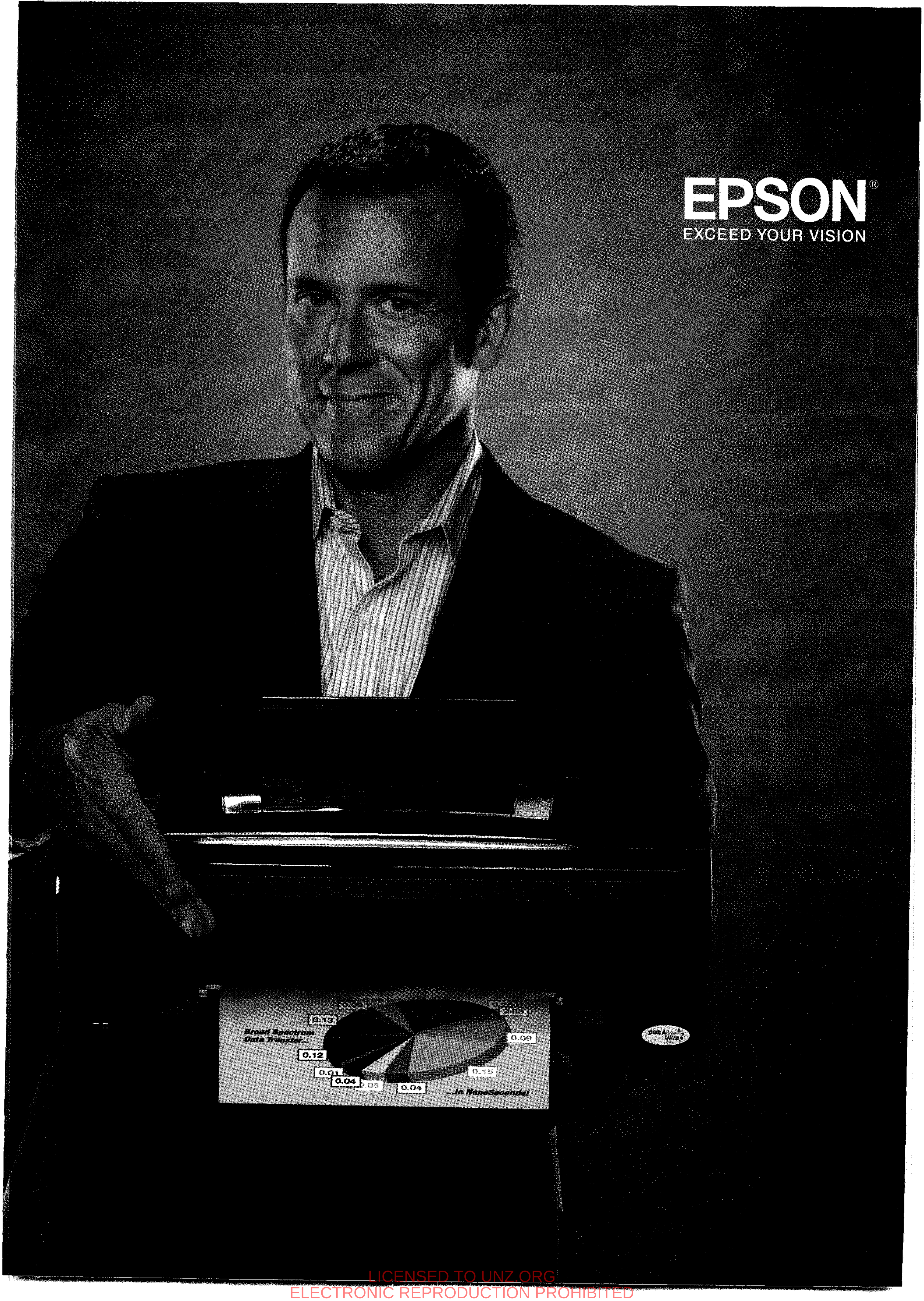
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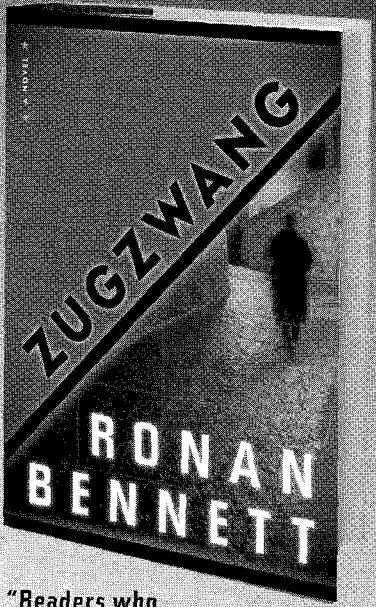

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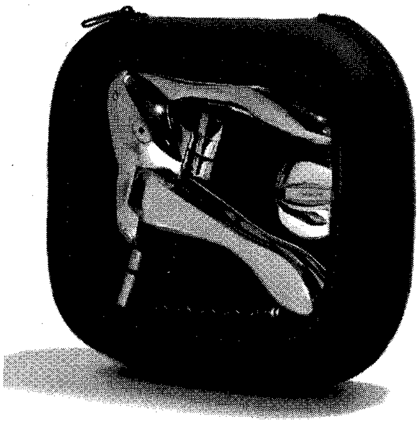

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CONTRIBUTORS

Hendrik Hertzberg (Comment, p. 35) is the author of "Politics: Observations & Arguments," which is available in paperback. He also writes a blog at newyorker.com.

Frances FitzGerald ("Come One, Come All," p. 46) has published several books, including "Cities on a Hill" and "Way Out There in the Blue."

Jeffrey Toobin (The Talk of the Town, p. 38) is a staff writer and the author of "The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court."

Patricia Marx ("Art and Commerce," p. 58) writes for film and television. The paperback edition of her novel "Him Her Him Again The End of Him" comes out in January.

Gerald Stern (Poem, p. 66) received the Wallace Stevens Award from the Academy of American Poets in 2005. His new collection of poems, "Save the Last Dance," is due out in the spring.

Christoph Niemann (Cover) is an illustrator and graphic designer. He published a children's book, "The Police Cloud," in March, and illustrated "The Boy with Two Belly Buttons," by Stephen J. Dubner, which was published in September.

Michael Specter ("Darwin's Surprise," p. 64), a staff writer, covers science and public health for the magazine.

Geraldine Brooks ("The Book of Exodus," p. 74) received the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for her novel "March." Her next novel, "People of the Book," was inspired by the story of the Sarajevo Haggadah, and will be out in January.

Marisa Silver (Fiction, p. 84) will publish her second novel, "The God of War," in the spring.

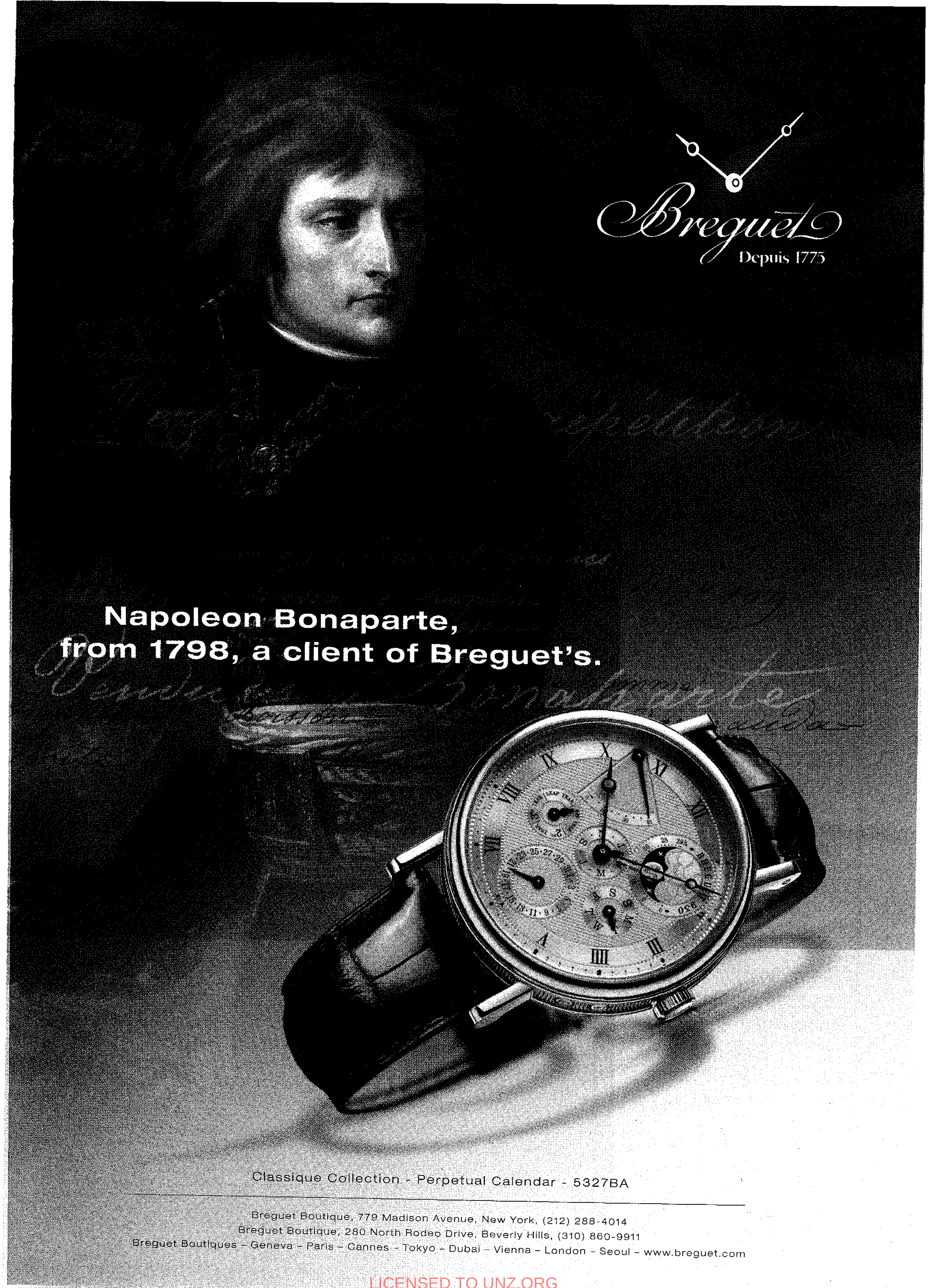
Bill Buford (A Critic at Large, p. 94) writes about food and drink for the magazine. His book "Heat," about his adventures in restaurant kitchens, is available in paperback.

Richard Kenney (Poem, p. 96) is the author of four books of poems, including "The One-Strand River: Poems, 1994-2007," due out in January.

John Updike (Books, p. 100) recently published "Due Considerations," his sixth collection of essays and literary criticism.

Alex Ross (Musical Events, p. 106) is the author of "The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century," which came out last month.

THIS WEEK ON NEWYORKER.COM
Michael Specter discusses retroviruses. / The Campaign Trail podcast: *Ryan Lizza* talks with *Dorothy Wickenden* about the Presidential campaign. / Photographs of Frank Santora and Faith Church, by *Brian Finke*. / Blogs by *Hendrik Hertzberg*, *George Packer*, *Dana Goodyear*, and *Sasha Frere-Jones*. / From the archives: *Malcolm Gladwell* on Rick Warren, *Bill Buford* on butchering a pig, and *Nell Freudenberger* on Ha Jin. / The Film File: thousands of movie reviews from Goings On About Town. / Animated cartoons, the caption contest, and a list of *New Yorker* events around the country.



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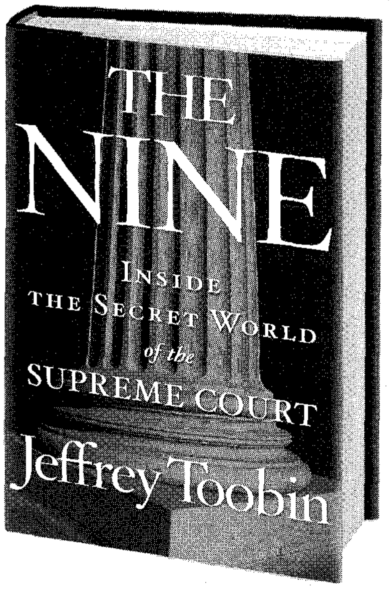

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PROFILES AND JUSTICE

Criminal profilers usually don't get involved in a case until other investigative avenues have been exhausted and, unlike the portrait provided in Malcolm Gladwell's piece, rarely suggest that they offer anything but educated guesses ("Dangerous Minds," November 12th). I've trained with a couple of former profilers—notably the incomparable Roy Hazelwood—who rigorously apply past experience to crimes and crime scenes that persistently elude solution. In the aftermath of extremely violent crimes, the pressure to bring offenders to justice for the sake of victims' loved ones and society is intense and immeasurable, and there is every reason to employ all methods possible to this challenge.

Jon Wilson
Brooklin, Maine

Gladwell's article, which addresses my work at great length, calls into question the effectiveness of criminal profiling. But he fails to understand that this technique, in the hands of an individual with a solid background in investigative methodology, can and does assist police agencies in apprehending criminals. Profilers do much more than draw up vague pictures of a would-be perp. (In fact, the F.B.I. has no position designated as "profiler.") More often than not, the "profiler" will provide other investigative suggestions, including proactive techniques, information for probable cause in search warrants, interview and interrogation strategies to be used when the suspect is apprehended, and prosecutorial strategies. These profilers are often relied upon to provide expert testimony when a case goes to trial.

In my most recent book, "Inside the Mind of BTK," I detail how the Wichita police came to my unit at the F.B.I. in 1984, seeking assistance in their investigation of the serial killer—BTK, as he called himself in notes to the police—who had terrorized their city. As Gladwell writes, we didn't take notes or create a nicely bound profile report. It was up to the visiting police to take away what they thought would help them in their investigation. What we did do was make a variety of suggestions on investigative strategies, one of which—the "supercop" technique, in which the suspect is encouraged to identify with a single officer—turned out to be a significant tool in getting BTK to drop his guard for the first time in three decades, and eventually led to his arrest.

Real profilers don't compartmentalize crimes as organized or disorganized, to the exclusion of other factors. A number of studies show that profiling is a respected investigative tool that works. If it didn't, police agencies, nationally and internationally, wouldn't see fit to continue using it to solve cases.

John Douglas
Mindhunter Investigative Support, Inc.
Fredericksburg, Va.

Gladwell does a fine job of revealing the folly of police profiling based on charlatanism rather than on empirical evidence. To take one example, in the fall of 2002 hundreds of Caucasian males driving white vans were stopped and searched by the police in major dragnets following the profiling of the Washington, D.C., area sniper, who turned out to be two black males working out of a blue sedan. The profilers were wrong, the investigation was disrupted, and justice was delayed. Profiling done badly—both in conventional policing and in counterterrorism—can compound errors, institutionalize racism, and erode legitimacy, contributing to the problems it aims to solve.

Brian Forst
Professor of Justice, Law and Society
School of Public Affairs
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Washington, D.C.

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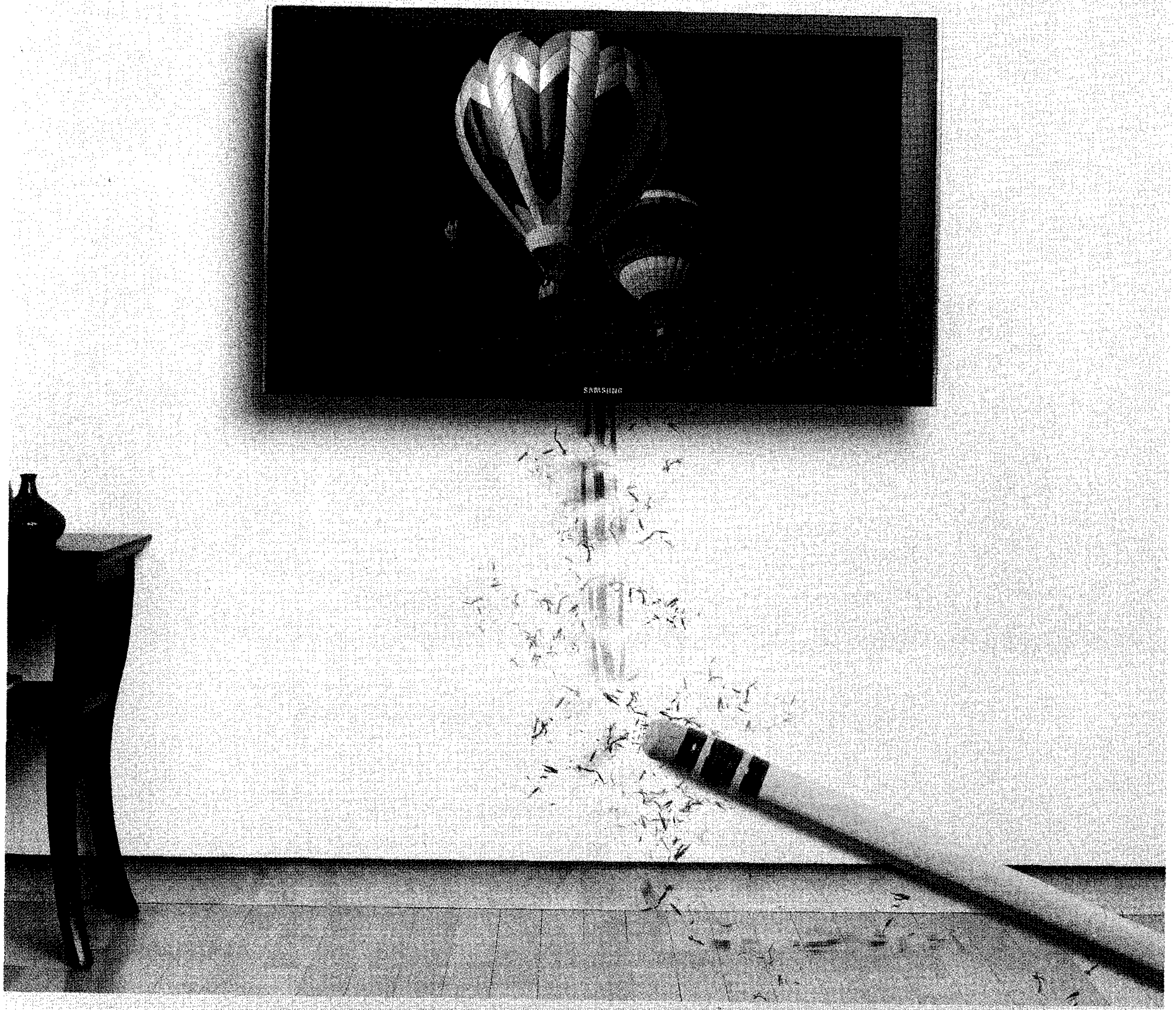

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The cabaret act Meow Meow, at Café Sabarsky. Photograph by Lisa Kereszi.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE
TWO WOMEN

Judith Malina and Pat Russell star in "Maudie & Jane," Luciano Nattino's adaptation of Doris Lessing's novel "The Diary of Jane Somers," about an encounter between a bag lady and a fashion-magazine editor. Hanon Reznikov directs the Living Theatre production. (See page 16.)

NIGHT LIFE
IT'S LIKE THAT

The JAM Awards were established in part to honor the legacy of the hip-hop innovator Jam Master Jay, the d.j. for the pioneering rap group Run-DMC, who was murdered in a Queens recording studio five years ago. The inaugural program for the awards show, at the Hammerstein Ballroom, includes a sprawling cast of rap luminaries, among them Snoop Dogg, Mobb Deep, Q-Tip, Papoose, Dead Prez, and Kid Capri. (See page 18.)

ART
FREE LAUNCH

The New Museum of Contemporary Art opens its building on the Bowery with "Unmonumental," a survey of recent international sculpture. In celebration of its thirtieth anniversary, the museum will stay open for thirty straight hours starting at noon on the first day, and admission will be free. (See page 22.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
SIMON SAYS

The "Berlin in Lights" programs are all wrapped up at Carnegie Hall, but Simon Rattle, the music director of the Berlin Philharmonic, is still here. Rattle will lead the Philadelphia Orchestra in a rare performance of Schumann's ultra-Romantic oratorio "Paradise and the Peri," from 1843. (See page 25.)

MOVIES
A VISIT TO JERZY

The Polish director Jerzy Skolimowski made a spate of freewheeling, quasi-autobiographical shaggy-dog features in the sixties. Influenced by the French New Wave, he went to Belgium and made a film with Jean-Pierre Léaud; when, back in Poland in 1967, his "Hands Up!" was banned by the regime, he fled to England. Anthology Film Archives offers a weekend of his works. (See page 29.)

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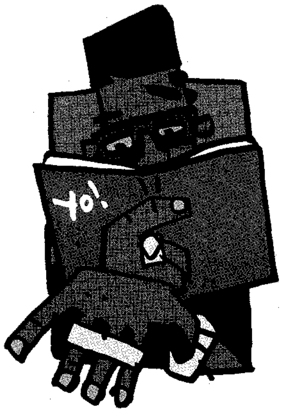
CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
BY THE BOOK



In too many instances, hip-hop has become a celebration of ruthless self-interest, delivered by performers who don't dare crack a smile for fear of losing status. That's not where the music started, as two new books of photographs make clear. In "Born in the Bronx," by Joe Conzo, the d.j.s and m.c.s do their share of scowling (and occasionally brandish weapons), but they also smile, wear fedoras, dance, and look like the skinny kids they are. Though Conzo's photographs document hip-hop between 1977 and 1982, a time line by the writer Jeff Chang asserts that the genre's origins stretch back to 1963, when the Cross Bronx Expressway tore the borough in half. Janette Beckman's "The Breaks" picks up where Conzo leaves off. Beckman, an Englishwoman, captured a variety of young performers in New York with a taste for bright colors: Salt 'n Pepa, the Native Tongues Posse, and Slick Rick. That this vivid local culture would become a big and slightly chilly business lends a strange aura to these remarkable books.

—*Sasha Frere-Jones*

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

At press time, Local 1, the Broadway stagehands' union, was on strike, and many Broadway theatres were dark. Please call the phone numbers listed with the theatres to verify that shows are running, and for timetables and ticket information.

AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY
This Steppenwolf transfer by Tracy Letts ("Bug") is about the disappearance of an Oklahoma family man. In previews. (Imperial, 245 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

BLACK NATIVITY
Classical Theatre of Harlem presents Langston Hughes's gospel play, set in Times Square in 1973. Alfred Preisser directs. Previews begin Nov. 30. Opens Dec. 2. (The Duke on 42nd Street, 229 W. 42nd St. 646-223-3010.)

CHEKHOV'S CHICKS
Elizabeth Rosengren adapted several of Chekhov's stories for this comedy, including "A Woman's Kingdom." Jewels Eubanks directs. Previews begin Nov. 29. Opens Nov. 30. (Manhattan Theatre Source, 177 Macdougal St. 212-352-3101.)

CYMBELINE
Michael Cerveris, Martha Plimpton, and Phylicia Rashad star in the Shakespeare romance. Mark Lamos directs. In previews. Opens Dec. 2. (Vivian Beaumont, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE DEVIL'S DISCIPLE
Irish Repertory Theatre presents George Bernard Shaw's 1897 melodrama, set during the Revolutionary War. In previews. (132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737.)

DR. SEUSS' HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS! THE MUSICAL
The classic holiday story, adapted for the stage, returns. Jack O'Brien directs. In previews. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

DORIS TO DARLENE, A CAUTIONARY VALENTINE
Jordan Harrison's play interweaves stories from the eighteen-sixties, while Wagner is writing his "Liebestod"; the nineteen-sixties, when a young woman becomes a pop star; and the present day. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

THE FARNSWORTH INVENTION
Hank Azaria and Jimmi Simpson star in a new play by Aaron Sorkin, about Philo Farnsworth, the boy genius who invented television, and David Sarnoff, the head of R.C.A., who challenged his patent ownership. Des McAnuff directs. In previews. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE HOMECOMING
Raúl Esparza, Ian McShane, Eve Best, and Michael McKean star in Harold Pinter's Tony-winning play from 1967, about a dysfunctional North London family. Daniel Sullivan directs. In previews. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

IS HE DEAD?
Michael Blakemore directs this recently unearthed comedy by Mark Twain, about an artist who fakes his death in the hope of inciting a bidding frenzy for his work. Norbert Leo Butz stars. In previews. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE LITTLE MERMAID
Francesca Zambello directs an adaptation of the film, with a book by Doug Wright and music and lyrics by Alan Menken, Howard Ashman, and Glenn Slater. In previews. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 212-307-4747.)

MAUDIE & JANE
Luciano Nattino adapted a Doris Lessing novel for this drama, in which a bag lady persuades a fashion editor to take care of her. Judith Malina and Pat Russell star. Previews begin Nov. 30. (Living Theatre, 19 Clinton St. 212-352-3101.)

NEW AMSTERDAMES
Flying Fig Theatre presents a satire about the women of New Amsterdam circa 1659, written by Ellen K. Anderson. Heather Ondersma directs. Previews begin Dec. 1. Opens Dec. 3. (HERE Arts Center, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 212-352-3101.)

OH, THE HUMANITY AND OTHER GOOD INTENTIONS
Marisa Tomei stars in the première of a new work by Will Eno, five short plays about everyday life. Jim Simpson directs. In previews. Opens Nov. 29. (Flea, 41 White St. 212-352-3101.)

PAM ANN
The Australian comedian Caroline Reid's one-woman show about a retro-glamorous flight attendant. Nov. 28-Dec. 2. (Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555.)

PUMPGIRL
The Irish playwright Abbie Spallen wrote this drama, set in rural Ireland, about a gas-station attendant, the race-car driver she is obsessed with, and his wife. Carolyn Cantor directs. In previews. Opens Dec. 4. (City Center, Stage II, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

THE PUPPETMASTER OF LODZ
Ralph Lee designed the twenty-two puppets that feature in Gilles Ségal's drama, set in 1950, about a concentration-camp escapee and puppetmaker who refuses to believe that the war is over. Previews begin Nov. 30. Opens Dec. 3. (ArcLight, 152 W. 71st St. 212-868-4444.)

QUEENS BOULEVARD (THE MUSICAL)
Signature Theatre Company presents the première of a musical by Charles Mee, in which a groom gets caught up in the city streets on his wedding day. In previews. Opens Dec. 3. (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529.)

THE SEAFARER
Conor McPherson's new play, set in Dublin on Christmas Eve, follows two aging brothers, one of whom is blind. The cast includes Ciarán Hinds, Conleth Hill, and David Morse. McPherson directs. In previews. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

TRUMPERY
A new play by Peter Parnell, set in 1858, in which Charles Darwin is developing his theory of natural selection at the same time that another explorer, thousands of miles away, comes up with the same idea. David Esbjornson directs. In previews. (Atlantic Theatre Company, 336 W. 20th St. 212-279-4200.)

WEST BANK, UK
Oren Safdie wrote the book and Ronnie Cohen wrote the music and lyrics for this new musical, about an Israeli transplant and a Palestinian refugee who share a London flat. Previews begin Nov. 29. Opens Dec. 2. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 212-475-7710.)

YELLOW FACE
Center Theatre Group co-produced this play by David Henry Hwang, inspired by his protest against the hiring of Jonathan Pryce for the original Broadway production of "Miss Saigon." Leigh Silverman directs. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555.)

NOW PLAYING

ACTS OF LOVE
In Kathryn Chetkovich's drama, a family is subjected to scrutiny when the son brings home his new girlfriend. Marc Geller directs. (Lion, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

BARN SERIES FESTIVAL
LAByrinth Theatre Company's annual staged-reading series of new plays in development includes "The Long Red Road," written by Brett Leonard and directed by Philip Seymour Hoffman, and Raúl Castillo's "Knives and Other Sharp Objects." (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555.)

THE CONSTANT COUPLE
At the Pearl, Jean Randich directs this 1699 comedy by George Farquhar, set in London, about a colonel trying to win over a popular lady. (80 St. Marks Pl. 212-598-9802.)

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT
Marilyn Campbell and Curt Columbus's brilliant adaptation of Dostoyevsky's novel pares the plot to its essentials, using a cast of three to play the key characters—Raskolnikov (Scott Parkinson), the destitute murderer/intellectual; Sonia (Susan Bennett), the prostitute he loves; and Porfiry Petrovich (John Judd), the canny detective who pursues him. The play be-

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BARYSHNIKOV ARTS CENTER
Julliard-trained dancer Doug Letheren was named a 2007 Movado Future Legends award winner by the legendary Mikhail Baryshnikov. Born in New Hampshire, Doug now dances with the Batsheva Ensemble, presenting over 100 performances to children and teenagers throughout Israel each year.

COOPER-HEWITT,
NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM
London-based design studio Doshi Levien partners Nipa Doshi and Jonathan Levien were chosen as Future Legends by Cooper-Hewitt Director Paul Warwick Thompson. Having met at England's Royal College of Art, they unite two distinct yet complementary cultural approaches in their work.

THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
Dancer Kirk Henning was named a Future Legend by renowned dancer Suzanne Farrell on behalf of the Kennedy Center's resident ballet company. Kirk joined The Suzanne Farrell Ballet in 2006, and appeared in the company's Kennedy Center Opera House engagement in November.

MOVADO

60 YEARS OF MODERN DESIGN

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movado is proud of its longtime role as a supporter of the arts. each movado future legends award is accompanied by an artistic grant.

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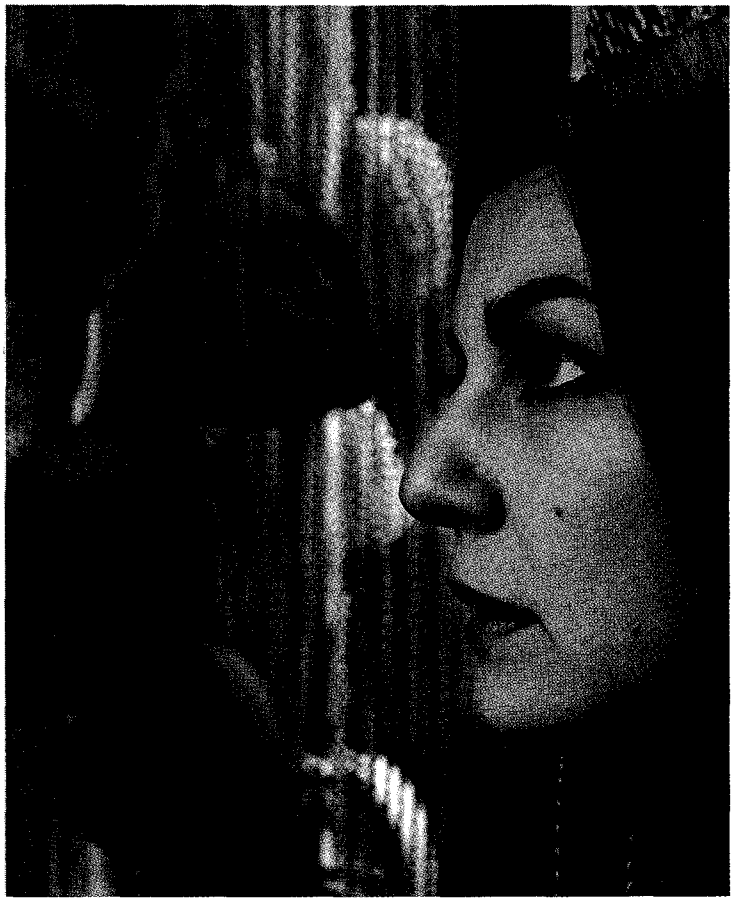
for more information about the movado future legends program, visit movado.com/legends

gins after Raskolnikov's crimes have been committed, with important scenes presented in well-integrated flashbacks. The clean, spare structure, with a stark set to match, provides ample psychic space for the actors to give nuanced performances that do justice to Dostoyevsky's dialogue about ordinary and extraordinary men, the conscience, and compassion. Deftly directed by Michael Halberstam. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200. Through Dec. 2.)

DAI (ENOUGH)
This one-woman show, written and performed by Iris Bahr, takes place in a Tel Aviv café in the minutes before a suicide bombing. Each character that Bahr portrays, including a reporter, a soldier's father, an Israeli expat living in Long Island, a mother of young children, a furniture designer, a prostitute, and a Palestinian statistics professor, speaks about life in Israel openly and boldly, with heart and humor and quirks—and then the bomb goes off. A recorded blast punctuates each monologue, followed by sounds of screaming, crying, and chaos. Bahr, an actress and comedian who has served in the Israeli Army, employs her diverse and disarming talents to bring about a single result: provoking deep sympathy for Israel and its people. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)



Aida Ruilova, with a sculpture in her exhibition "Lulu," at Salon 94.

JENS UMBACH

HOODOO LOVE
Everyone's got the blues and no one can really sing in Katori Hall's chronicle of black life in nineteen-thirties Memphis: spirited, luckless young Toulou (Angela Lewis), who just arrived from the Mississippi Delta; her dissolute brother, a phony preacher; her meddlesome, spell-casting neighbor lady; and her shiftless lover, a bluesman known as the Ace of Spades. The plot is soapy, the music an afterthought, the structure meandering. Yet under Lucie Tiberghien's energetic direction Hall's flawed tale refuses to sink, buoyed by sheer youthful exuberance and bursts of genuine feeling. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 212-239-6200.)

LULU
Michael Thalheimer directs Frank Wedekind's play, performed by Hamburg's Thalia Theatre. In German, with English supertitles. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100. Through Dec. 1.)

ODE TO THE MAN WHO KNEELS
Richard Maxwell wrote, composed, and directed this musical Western. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 212-966-3651. Through Dec. 2.)

THE PIANO TEACHER
The Vineyard Theatre opens its season with the première of a new play by Julia Cho. (Reviewed in this issue.) (108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303.)

SECRET ORDER
Bob Clyman's cancer-research thriller centers on a brilliant young Midwestern immunologist, William Shumway (Dan Colman), who thinks he's found a cure, and his mentor, Robert Brock (Larry Pine), who recruits him to his renowned institute in New York. The play illustrates the forces that contribute to and threaten ethical research; Shumway soon finds himself snowed under by the demands of the well-funded lab, the expectations of the investors, and talk of the Nobel Prize, and he scrambles to prove his theory even as it starts to fail. Clyman's plot moves at a brisk clip, and the dialogue, especially for Pine's tremendously entertaining Dr. Brock, keeps things lively throughout. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN
Although there is plenty of electricity in the air at the new Broadway musical version of Mel Brooks's 1974 film, lightning doesn't strike twice. With its slack plot and its inflated production numbers, the show transforms a tale of romantic agony into a theatrical agony. Roger Bart, as Frederick, is noisy but unnuanced, lacking Gene Wilder's crotchety vulnerability. Sutton Foster, as Inga, his Bavarian booty call, has a leggy charm but generates no real comic chemistry with her bellowing leading man. Only Andrea Martin, as Frau Blucher, the housekeeper and lover of the late Victor von Frankenstein ("He vas my boyfriend"), manages to stamp her droll personality and her sense of timing on the hectic proceedings. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/19/07.) (Hilton, 213 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.)

Also Playing

THE BROTHERS SIZE: Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555. **DIE MOMMIE DIE!:** New World Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200. **THE FANTASTICKS:** Snapple Theatre Center, 210 W. 50th St. 212-307-4100. **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY: RUDE AWAKENING:** 47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200. **THE GLORIOUS ONES:** Mitzi E. Newhouse, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200. **GONE MISSING:** Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200. **HAMLET:** Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555. Through Dec. 2. **A HARD HEART:** Clurman, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. **JUMP:** Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 212-307-4100. **MAKE ME A SONG: THE MUSIC OF WILLIAM FINN:** New World Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200. **MARY POPPINS:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4747. **MASKED:** DR2, at 103 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200. **THE OVERWHELMING:** Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300. **PETER AND JERRY:** Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422. **PYGMALION:** American Airlines, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300. **THE RECEPTIONIST:** City Center, Stage I, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. **RICHARD III:** Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 212-352-3101. **THE RITZ:** Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-719-1300. **SPEECH & DEBATE:** Roundabout Underground, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300. **TINGS DEY HAPPEN:** Culture Project, 55 Mercer St. 212-352-3101. **THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE:** Circle in the Square, 50th St. between Broadway and Eighth Ave. 212-239-6200. **XANADU:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

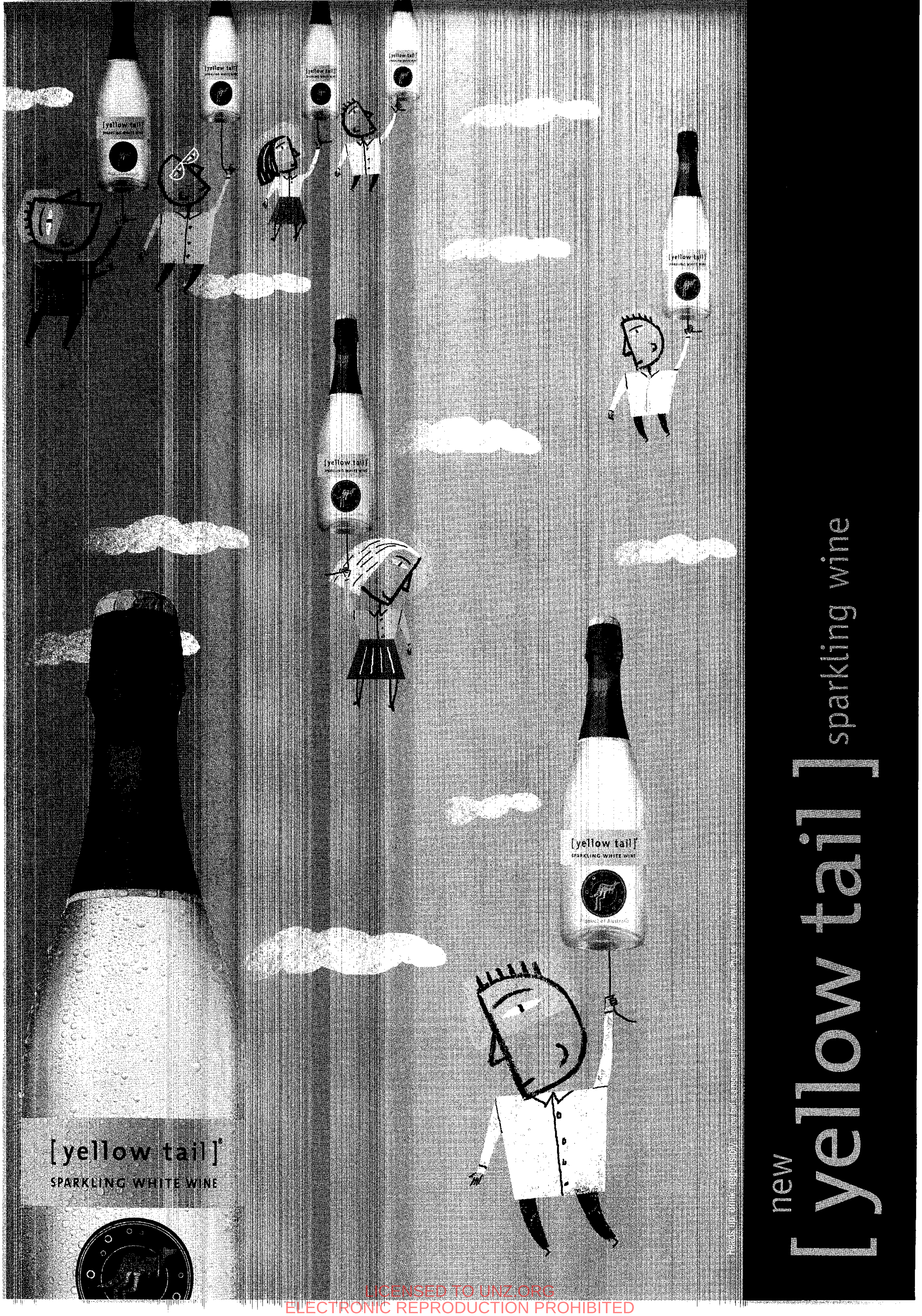
NIGHT LIFE
ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BLENDER THEATRE AT GRAMERCY
127 E. 23rd St. (212-307-7171)—Nov. 29: **My Life with the Thrill Kill Kult** started out in the late eighties, recording on Wax Trax!, an independent label that specialized in industrial music. But, unlike most of their label mates, the Kult delivered libidinous grooves instead of stentorian stomping, and made disco music with a satanic junkie aesthetic. Though the halcyon days of that scene are long over, the Kult slithers on with a new album, "The Filthiest Show in Town," which has a late-night lounge sound.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Nov. 30: **Los Campesinos!**, a septet from Wales, makes exuberant pop music that's quickly winning it a devoted following. Dec. 1: The English guitarist, songwriter, and crooner **Richard Hawley** toured with the band Pulp in the nineties and went on to become an in-demand session player. Recently, he embarked on a solo career, which got off to a fast start; his album "Cole's Corner," from 2005, was nominated for a Mercury Prize. His latest release, "Lady's Bridge," is a lush work of wistful pop. Dec. 2: Seattle's **Mudhoney**, the red-headed stepchild of the Sub Pop set, never enjoyed the success and the global status of the likes of Nirvana, Pearl Jam, and Soundgarden. Nevertheless, the group has ardent fans who deeply appreciate its irreverent and often sloppy approach. As part of the "Don't Look Back" series (an offshoot of the U.K.'s "All Tomorrow's Parties" festival), in which artists revisit watershed moments from their catalogues, Mudhoney will be performing its acclaimed album "Superfuzz Bigmuff" in its entirety, along with some early singles.

HAMMERSTEIN BALLROOM
Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. (212-307-7171)—Nov. 29: The **JAM Awards.** Twenty years ago, the rap group Run-DMC presaged the cultural dominance of hip-hop by delivering the genre's first gold and platinum records and altering the fashion and musical tastes of the nation's suburban youths with hits like "My Adidas," "You Be Illin'," and the crossover smash "Walk This Way." As hip-hop grew up, it developed a bad image (and not in the "bad meaning bad but bad meaning good" way, as Run and DMC put it on the single "Peter Piper"). To counter this image, **DMC** is hosting an awards show that honors hip-hop achievers in the fields of social justice, the arts, and music. The show includes performances by **Dead Prez, Raekwon, De La Soul,** and many others. Dec. 2: The rock-and-roll flute of **Jethro Tull.** Dec. 4: Long Island's **Brand New** launched its career as a by-the-numbers emo-punk band, playing paeans to lost love, but the group has grown into something far more interesting. On "The Devil and God Are Raging In-


new [yellow tail] sparkling wine
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SPARKLING WHITE WINE
Product of Australia

side Me," released last year, they came up with dense, layered songs that matched the emotional intricacies of their lyrics. The lyrics are still acutely earnest and wrought, but now the music sounds genuinely inspired.

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Nov. 30: **Greta Gertler,** a Brooklyn-based Australian singer-songwriter with a fondness for lushly orchestrated seventies-era pop, appears in the company of the Extroverts, a group that includes a tuba and a bass drum. They're celebrating the release of Gertler's new album, "Edible Restaurant," which, while it is a less elaborate production than her earlier efforts, is just as rewarding.

MUSIC HALL OF WILLIAMSBURG
66 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-486-5400)—Dec. 1: **Mudhoney** (see the Bowery Ballroom). Dec. 4: **Ted Leo and the Pharmacists.** Leo, a true hero of the underground, writes songs packed with insightful lyrics, which he leavens with aggressive guitar work and poignant vocalizing.

NOKIA THEATRE TIMES SQUARE
Broadway at 44th St. (212-307-7171)—Nov. 30: The **Dan Band,** the Los Angeles group that rocked the movie "Old School." Dec. 1: Had it not been for the championing of the "Jackass" veteran Bam Margera, Finland's goth-metal band **H.I.M.** (His Infernal Majesty) might have come off as too European for American audiences. Versed in the pomp and histrionics of eighties gothic rock (with a burly metallic twist), H.I.M.'s early material had earned the group only minor cult status here. Then along came Margera's magic touch, and their name was suddenly on every skateboarder's lips. The band strips away its rococo excess on its latest album, "Venus Doom."

The British crooner Richard Hawley livens up the Bowery Ballroom.

MARCELLUS HALL

ROSELAND
239 W. 52nd St. (212-307-7171)—Nov. 29: **Coheed and Cambria** demonstrate an unlikely combination of progressive-rock prowess and punk-rock intensity. The ambitious quartet specializes in complicated song titles, inventive arrangements, and high-pitched vocals that suggest an unhealthy intake of helium.

TERMINAL 5
610 W. 56th St. (212-260-4700)—Nov. 30-Dec. 1: **Ween.** In one of the more unlikely musical odysseys of the past two decades, the pseudo brothers Gene and Dean Ween have earned a dedicated following by devoting themselves to unpredictability. In the course of their career, they've travelled from Zappa-esque scatology to lava-lamp soul to chicken-pickin' country. Ween plays every genre it decides to inhabit with resolute perfection, as is clear on its new release, "La Cucaracha." Think of them as the Coen brothers of rock and roll.

WEBSTER HALL
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—Nov. 30-Dec. 1: The chiming guitar work, jittery drumming, and barroom piano playing of Los Angeles's **Cold War Kids.**

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE
In 1982, the National Endowment for the Arts established the National Heritage Fellowships for folk and traditional musicians. The institute is celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the program with a concert series. Nov. 30: The Irish entertainer **Mick Moloney,** along with the fiddler **Liz Carroll,** the guitarist **John Doyle,** the button accordionist **Joe Derrane,** and others. Dec. 1: **Simon Shaheen,** a tireless ambassador of Arabic music, and his Near Eastern Music Ensemble headline a night of Arab, Armenian, and Bukharan music. With the nay (reed flute) player **Nadim Dlaikan,** the oud player **Richard Hagopian,** and others. (Both shows are at New York University's Skirball Center, 566 LaGuardia Pl., at Washington Sq. S. For more information, call 212-545-7536.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Nov. 27-Dec. 2: **Stacey Kent.** On her latest album, "Breakfast on the Morning Tram," the acclaimed singer introduces songs written by her husband, the saxophonist Jim Tomlinson, and Kazuo Ishiguro, the author of "The Remains of the Day" and "Never Let Me Go."

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Nov. 27-28: The **Charles Neville** quartet. The saxophonist and vocalist Neville has both jazzier and more eclectic musical leanings than his siblings in the Neville Brothers Band. He is joined here by **Ying Yang,** on the erhu, an ancient Chinese stringed instrument.

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Nov. 27-Dec. 2: The Russian-émigré saxophonist **Igor Butman** gets grand backing from the pianist **Cyrus Chestnut,** the bassist **George Mraz,** and the drummer **Lewis Nash.**

FEINSTEIN'S AT LOEWS REGENCY
540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (212-339-4095)—Nov. 27-Dec. 29: Back on his home turf, the pianist **Michael Feinstein** offers a program of endearing and ecumenical holiday fare.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Nov. 29-Dec. 2: The blind blues pianist **Henry Butler** swings by with his New Orleans All-Stars. He's joined by a string of jazz masters from his home city, including the saxophonist **Donald Harrison, Jr.** (Nov. 29-Dec. 1), the clarinettist **Dr. Michael White** (Nov. 29), and the trumpeter **Kermit Ruffins** (Dec. 2). Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.** The **Mingus Big Band** takes over on Tuesdays.

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER
Broadway at 60th St. (212-721-6500)—Nov. 30-Dec. 1: **Wynton Marsalis** and the **Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra** are joined by the saxophone and clarinet wizard **Paquito D'Rivera,** a perfect collaborator with whom to explore the byways of Latin-influenced jazz.

JAZZ GALLERY
290 Hudson St., near Spring St. (212-242-1063)—Nov. 29: The **Joe Fiedler** trio. The trombonist Fiedler, who has supported Wynton Marsalis, Anthony Braxton, and a slew of Latin performers, celebrates the release of his new CD, "The Crab." Nov. 30: The Gallery heads uptown for a show at the Gatehouse (150 Convent Ave., at W. 135th St.) with **Roy Hargrove** and his big band. The neo-bop trumpeter Hargrove has long had a romance with hip-hop; he's joined here by the old-school rapper **Q-Tip,** of A Tribe Called Quest.

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Nov. 29-Dec. 2: The annual Tango Meets Jazz Festival features **Pablo Ziegler** (Astor Piazzolla's former pianist) and his quartet; the guest jazz soloists include the flutist **Nestor Torres** (Nov. 29-30) and the trumpeter **Terell Stafford** (Dec. 1-2).

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Nov. 27-Dec. 2: The **Lou Donaldson** quartet. The inimitable alto saxophonist Donaldson delivers a high-style blend of authentic bop and good-time R. & B. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—**"The Age of Rembrandt."** Through Jan. 6. ♦ **"Tapestry in the Baroque: Threads of Splendor."** Through Jan. 6. ♦ **"Eternal Ancestors: The Art of the Central African Reliquary."** Through March 2. ♦ **"The Gates of Paradise: Lorenzo Ghiberti's Renaissance Masterpiece."** Through Jan. 13. ♦ **"Impressed by Light: British Photographs from Paper Negatives, 1840-1860."** Through Dec. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Martin Puryear."** Through Jan. 14. ♦ **"Georges Seurat: The**

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Drawings." Through Jan. 7. ♦ **"New Photography 2007: Tanyth Berkeley, Scott McFarland, Berni Searle."** Through Jan. 1. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"Richard Prince: Spiritual America."** Through Jan. 8. ♦ **"Foto: Modernity in Central Europe."** Through Jan. 13. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (800-944-8639)—**"Lawrence Weiner: As Far as the Eye Can See."** Through Feb. 10. ♦ **"Kara Walker: My Complement, My Enemy, My Oppressor, My Love."** Through Feb. 3. ♦ **"Piotr Uklanski: Summer Love."** Through Dec. 9. ♦ **"Danny Lyon: Montage, Film, and Still Photography."** Through Dec. 2. ♦ **"Jacob Lawrence's 'Migration' Series: Selections from the Phillips Collection."** Through Jan. 6. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM
200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"Infinite Island: Contemporary Caribbean Art."** Through Jan. 27. ♦ **"Brushed with Light: American Landscape Watercolors from the Collection."** Through Jan. 27. ♦ **"Global Feminisms Remix."** Through Feb. 3. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—**"Water: H_2O=Life."** Through May 26. ♦ **"Mythic Creatures: Dragons, Unicorns, and Mermaids."** Through Jan. 6. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

FRICK COLLECTION
1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700)—**"Gabriel de Saint-Aubin (1724-1780)."** A century before Baudelaire's flâneurs were strolling through Paris, Saint-Aubin was a fixture on the city's streets, documenting the comings and goings of the culturati. His output was uneven (the seven academic paintings here are uninspiring), but his range is impressive, from illustrations published in the *livrets* accompanying the Salon exhibitions to designs for dishes and book marginalia that look like comic-book storyboards. A drawing of the nineteen-year-old King of Denmark visiting a life-drawing class at the Académie Royale (travelling "incognito" under the name Travendal, although his entourage was recognized everywhere) offers a snapshot of art and aristocracy at a time when the paparazzo was an invited draftsman rather than a predatory photographer. Through Jan. 27. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—**"From The New Yorker to Shrek: The Art of William Steig."** Through March 16. ♦ **"Camille Pissarro: Impressions of City and Country."** Through Feb. 3. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45, and Thursdays, 11 to 8.)

MORGAN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
225 Madison Ave., at 36th St. (212-685-0008)—**"Painted with Words: Vincent van Gogh's Letters to Émile Bernard."** Through Jan. 6. ♦ **"Drawing Connections: Baselitz, Kelly, Penone, Rockburne, and the Old Masters."** Following in the footsteps of MOMA's popular "Artist's Choice" series, the Morgan invited four contemporary artists to select drawings from its collection, which are exhibited here alongside examples of their own work. Georg Baselitz opts for the sensuousness of Parmigianino; Ellsworth Kelly for Rubens, Degas, and van Gogh, who accomplish much with, as he writes, a "minimal amount of marks." Giuseppe Penone is attracted to pattern and texture in Klimt and Mantegna; Dorothea Rockburne to twisting Mannerist compositions. While the exhibition is sedate when compared with, say, Scott Burton's controversial 1989 "Artist's Choice" show (for which he selected Brancusi bases, sans sculptures), it does open the door for the Morgan to engage with contemporary art. Through Jan. 6. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5, Fridays, 10:30 to 9, Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

MUSEUM OF ARTS & DESIGN
40 W. 53rd St. (212-956-3535)—**"Pricked: Extreme Embroidery."** The museum, in its continuing mission to transform itself from a fuddy-duddy craft mecca into a transgressive art-and-design showplace, presents this pendant to the exhibition "Radical Lace and Subversive Knitting." Some works feel gratuitously hipsterish, like Benji Whalen's stuffed-fabric arms with embroidered tattoos and Maria E. Piñeres's needlework portraits of Paris Hilton and Eminem. Others engage, including Laura Owens's vaguely Asian decorative landscape, Laura Splan's lace tatted into the shapes of viruses, and Nava Lubelski's playful outline of a wine stain on a tablecloth. No embroidery-as-art show would be complete without the great Elaine Reichek, who is represented here by a large installation that renders Samuel F. B. Morse's first telegraphed message—"What hath God wrought?"—in stitched dots and dashes and words. Through March 9. (Open daily, 10 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

NEUE GALERIE
1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200)—**"Gustav Klimt: The Ronald S. Lauder and Serge Sabarsky Collections."** Through June 30. (Open Thursdays, and Saturdays through Mondays, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 11 to 9.)

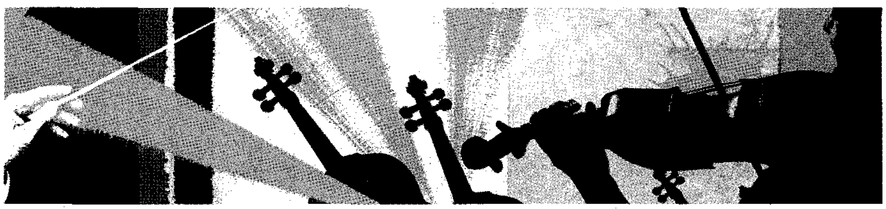
NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
235 Bowery, at Prince St. (212-219-1222)—The *museum inaugurates its new building with* **"Unmonumental: The Object in the 21st Century,"** an international survey of recent sculpture that examines the antiheroic tendency in contemporary art. Through March 23. (Open Wednesdays, and weekends, noon to 6, and Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 10.)

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
170 Central Park W., at 77th St. (212-873-3400)—**"French Founding Father: Lafayette's Return to Washington's America."** Through Aug. 16, 2008. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6, and Friday evenings until 8.)

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. (212-869-8089)—**"Multiple Interpretations"** is a selection of contemporary prints, conceived in series, that are new to the library's collection. Through Jan. 27. (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 7:30, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

QUEENS MUSEUM OF ART
Flushing Meadows-Corona Park (718-592-9700)—**"Yue Minjun and the Symbolic Smile."** Through Jan. 6. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM
144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500)—**"Kori Newkirk: 1997-2007."** Through March 9. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6, and Saturdays, 10 to 6.)



CLASSICAL NOTES
GOULD STANDARD

Opera fanatics have Maria Callas; everyone else has Glenn Gould. For listeners, the endless stream of reissues is justified by these artists' incandescent talents—and for EMI and Sony Classical, who, respectively, control most of their recorded legacies, it's been great business, too.

Sony may have finally topped itself by offering all of its Gould recordings, with the original jacket art, in one boxed set (available exclusively on Amazon.com). But another recent Gould reissue, **"The Young Maverick,"** a six-disk set from CBC Records (a division of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), has a purity of intention that commands respect. These radio performances from the early nineteen-fifties, recorded mostly in Toronto, reveal the young virtuoso in all his glory—including a lyrical 1954 rendition of Bach's Goldberg Variations, the same piece that, a year later, launched his international career, thanks to a recording by Columbia Records, Sony's predecessor. The vintage sound of the broadcasts sometimes obscures, though never overwhelms, the quality of these performances. Gould's conception of Berg's Piano Sonata is so sumptuous that it conquers the scrapes and scratches that occasionally surround it; his interpretation of Schoenberg's Piano Concerto (praised by the composer's widow) is wonderfully crisp and vibrant, even if the sounds of Gould and of the CBC Radio Symphony seem as distant from the listener as Nova Scotia is from Nunavut.

Sony has inadvertently paid Gould a kind of tribute by releasing a new recording—by the pianist Emanuel Ax and the actor Patrick Stewart—of Strauss's 1897 melodrama "Enoch Arden," a work closely associated with Gould and the actor Claude Rains, whose Columbia recording, made in 1961, has long held a treasured place in the hearts of connoisseurs. (The spoken text, a poem by Tennyson about a shipwrecked sailor who, after many years, returns to his Scottish village to discover that his wife has married their mutual best friend, has inspired a number of Hollywood films.) Gould and Rains's performance has a grand, theatrical air that evokes the Broadway of the Barrymores and the Lunts; Stewart, backed up by Ax's warm yet subtle playing, offers an amiable, intimate reading that belies his careful attention to the text.

—Russell Platt

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Galleries are usually open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6; please call the gallery for exact hours.

RAY K. METZKER
Metzker, a photographer who never does the same thing twice, has been tweaking his medium for more than fifty years, with consistently intriguing and intelligent results. His latest series—small-scale collages, photograms, and ephemeral abstractions, most made without a camera—is looser and more sensuous than usual. One group involves the manipulation of darkroom chemicals for a creamy, scorched effect that suggests smoke, fog, roiling clouds, or a liquefied landscape. The

JOHN RITTER

compositions of torn and cut paper, which include a number of photographic elements, don't always hold together, but when they do they point Metzker's work in a whole new direction. Through Jan. 12. (Laurence Miller, 20 W. 57th St. 212-397-3930.)

JULES OLITSKI

Olitski, championed by critics in the nineteen-sixties for his canvases sprayed with pigment, continued to turn out assured, evocative abstract paintings until shortly before his death, in February, at the age of eighty-four. In the seventies, his style shifted to a heavy impasto, and the late paintings here present softball-size blobs of acrylic paint left to dry and crust on the canvas—tactile orbs of burning color. A few look like aerial maps rendered in earthy relief, while, in others, simple rectangles drawn with a paintbrush around the edge of the canvas function as playful frames. Throughout, one senses the wonder and curiosity of a painter who approached each canvas as a journey into the unknown. Through Jan. 5. (Knoedler & Company, 19 E. 70th St. 212-794-0550.)

"CZECH VISION"

"Foto," the Guggenheim's excellent survey of avant-garde photography in Central Europe between the wars, is shrewdly complemented by this more focussed show of portraiture, still-life, landscape, abstraction, and advertising works from Czechoslovakia in roughly the same period. Prevailing influences (the Bauhaus, Constructivism, Man Ray) are tempered by the eroticism and intimacy of František Drtikol, Josef Sudek, and Jaromír Funke. These photographers are joined by the lesser known and the newly discovered, most of whom balance rigor with warmth. The spirit of experimentation that animates so many of the images here is exhilarating. Through Dec. 8. (Greenberg, 41 E. 57th St. 212-334-0010.)

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

DAN ESTABROOK

Estabrook, a member of what the critic Lyle Rexer has dubbed "the antiquarian avant-garde," uses a variety of outmoded photographic processes to make images that look like they were produced in the medium's early years by a magician, a comedian, a besotted lover, or all of the above. This compact survey of work from 1992 to the present rounds up salt prints, waxed calotype negatives, a Polaroid, a tintype, and a small sculpture made of salt. Estabrook's subjects—mysterious maidens and men in top hats—look similarly old-fashioned. Painted elements introduce spectral hands, curling breath, and dripping blood into dreamy, uncanny pictures that slip through time. Through Dec. 22. (Cooney, 511 W. 25th St. 212-255-8158.)

JOHN JURAYJ

Paintings on mirrored Plexiglas imagine war as a cheap but slamming discotheque, where hot streaks and sparks of color spatter every surface. Appropriating photographs from thirty years of violence in Lebanon, Jurayj embeds the black silhouettes of bombed buildings into bursts of purple, pink, and orange paint, with slivers of the reflective surface adding glimpses of the viewer's own face to the scene. But the most convincing images foreground the buildings, preventing one from delighting too much in the palette. A suite of digital prints—portraits of Lebanese political leaders in which the eyes have been burned out—doubles as a caveat against wallowing in visual pleasure. Through Dec. 22. (Audiello, 526 W. 26th St. 212-675-9082.)

JOEL SHAPIRO

Are Shapiro's blocky, leggy sculptures abstract or figurative? In the catalogue accompanying the show, the art historian Richard Schiff invites us to toss out these tired distinctions and think instead about "configuration" and "disfiguration." This is easy enough in cases where the painted wood or bronze objects draw your eye to the ingenious joints and impossible intersections, and to the raw, unfinished ends. But, in other works, the evocation of human arms reaching out in supplication or of animals charging is almost overwhelming. Either way, this is a show by an artist at the height of his powers. Through Jan. 12. (PaceWildenstein, 545 W. 22nd St. 212-989-4258.)

Short List

LINA BERTUCCI: Rubenstein, 534 W. 24th St. 212-627-8000. Through Jan. 5. **BYRON DOBELL:** First Street Gallery, 526 W. 26th St. 646-336-8053. Opens Dec. 4. **WADE GUYTON/CHARLINE VON HEYL:** Petzel, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9467. Through Dec. 15. **NINA KATCHADOURIAN:** Meltzer, 525-531 W. 26th St. 212-727-9330. Through Dec. 22. **CHARLES RAY:** Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 212-243-0200. Through Jan. 19. **JASON RHOADES:** Zwirner, 525 W. 19th St. 212-727-2070. Through Jan. 12.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

BETH DOW

This photographer's New York début is smartly understated—modest but memorable. Dow's images of woods and fields nod to the landscape tradition reaching from Eugène Atget to Robert Adams, and their quiet beauty is underlined by the richness of her platinum-palladium prints. Dealing with the overfamiliar subject of man's rude intrusion into the natural world, she's not always subtle—stacked logs and felled limbs abound—but she knows when to step back and allow an image to breathe. Her pictures of a lone tree in a row of stumps and a pile of smoking stubble under a sad gray sky aren't just taken; they're felt. Through Dec. 8. (Bekman, 6 Spring St. 212-219-0166.)

EILEEN QUINLAN

The artist, whose multilayered abstract photographs have enlivened a number of group shows in the past year, makes an impressive solo début by refining her signature style. Her "Smoke & Mirrors" photographs deploy those elements to shatter perspective and allow details to ricochet around within the frame. The pictures can suggest visionary architecture, but Quinlan has also pared the work down to exceedingly elegant flattened geometries stained with color. Some of the best pieces here don't depend on reflections or color for their uncanny attraction; working in black-and-white with what appear to be distressed or puckered surfaces, Quinlan delves into even more mysterious and uncharted territory. Through Dec. 9. (Abreu, 36 Orchard St. 212-995-1774.)

ALAN SARET

The mechanics of Saret's "Gang Drawings" are deceptively simple: a fistful (a "gang") of colored pencils produce clusters of synchronized, multihued marks. The images, which evoke swarming paramecia or swirling cosmic dust, project a joyous, concentrated energy—Saret's habit of using the word "ensoulment" in his titles feels earned. (Two sculptures of tangled wire, the artist's signature medium, recapitulate the gang forms in three dimensions.) Dating from 1967 to the present, the drawings are a testament to Saret's stature as a pioneering post-minimalist and to his history as an art-world maverick. Through Feb. 7. (Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. 212-219-2166.)

Short List

LIZZI BOUGATSOS: Fuentes, 35 St. James Pl. 212-577-1201. Through Dec. 2. **CAMERON MARTIN:** Eleven Rivington, 11 Rivington St. 212-982-1930. Through Jan. 5. **PAUL McCARTHY:** Maccarone, 630 Greenwich St. 212-431-4977. Through Dec. 24. **ADRIAN PACI:** Smith-Stewart, 53 Stanton St. 212-477-2821. Through Dec. 22. **AIDA RUILOVA:** Salon 94, at 1 Freeman Alley. 646-672-9212. Through Dec. 8.

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Lina Bertucci's photograph "Natasha, 22, Graphic Design Student," at Rubenstein.

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET

George Balanchine's "Nutcracker," from 1954, with its magically growing tree, gliding bed, and adorable angels, is a highlight of the season for thousands of children each year. For lovers of dance, there is the incomparable score and the opportunity to discover an up-and-comer in one of the many featured roles, from the sinuous Arabian coffee dancer to the leaping candy cane, from the sprightly Dewdrop to every young ballerina's dream, the Sugarplum Fairy. Through Dec. 30. (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-721-6500. Nov. 29 and Dec. 4 at 6, Nov. 30 at 8, Dec. 1 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 2 at 1 and 5. Through Feb. 24.)

BALLET HISPANICO

In addition to its usual crowd-pleasing virtues, this week Tina Ramirez's company adds a trump card: live music by Arturo O'Farrill's excellent Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra. The vehicle is Willie Rosario's "Palladium Nights," a character-based evocation of the legendary Home of Mambo, updated by the Broadway choreographer Sergio Trujillo. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Nov. 27-28 at 7:30, Nov. 29-30 at 8, Dec. 1 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 2 at 2 and 7:30. Through Dec. 9.)

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATRE

The big news of this year's five-week season is Maurice Béjart's 1970 radical-chic version of Stravinsky's "Firebird." The dance, though not as vulgar as the works that earned the French choreographer his reputation (among New York critics) as the King of Eurotrash, is unsubtle enough to prompt the annual sigh that the Ailey dancers deserve better. The week's other première is a hoedown by Fredrick Earl Mosley called "Saddle Up." In this context, last year's import—Twyla Tharp's aerobic "Golden Section"—should shine even more brightly. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. Nov. 28 and Dec. 4 at 7, Nov. 29-30 at 8, Dec. 1 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 2 at 3 and 7:30. Through Dec. 31.)

PAPPA TARAHUMARA

As in a Surrealist poem, the images that Hiroshi Koike, the director of this Japanese dance-theatre group, creates in "Ship in a View" are evocative and at times mysteriously moving—and often quite beautiful—but their meaning and internal logic can be mystifying. The themes that do emerge include a community and its relation to water (a ship's mast dominates the stage), the wonder and fear associated with childhood, and the intrusion of technology on everyday life. (BAM's Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Nov. 28, Nov. 30, and Dec. 1 at 7:30.)

BETH GILL / DANIEL LINEHAN

Both of the young choreographers on this double bill question the value of dance. Gill's quartet "Eleanor & Eleanor" is a slow rumination on basic compositional forms. "What is unison?" the piece seems to ask, giving viewers time to ponder. Linehan's solo "Not About Everything" is a self-reflexive tour de force. For thirty minutes, he spins like a whirling dervish, making gradual variations in tempo and shape that complement variations in his chanting of the title phrase. The chanting expands into a list of what the piece isn't about, a list that anticipates, and negates, just about every possible description of the piece—including this one. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Nov. 28-Dec. 1 at 7:30.)

GINA GIBNEY DANCE

"The Distance Between Us" takes place amid handsome translucent panels that look like Japanese screens. Moving around them, the members of Gibney's six-person, all-female ensemble are continually aware of each other, coming together and separating in shifting combinations. Like Ryan Lott's unclassifiable and diverse score, the dance keeps changing, but the bulk of it is dim and hazy, even when not behind screens. (Ailey Citigroup Theatre, 405 W. 55th St. 212-868-4444. Nov. 28-Dec. 1 at 8.)

NEW SHANGHAI CIRCUS

The performers in this Chinese troupe include a child phenomenon who executes astonishingly lithe slow-motion acrobatics and a beautiful young girl who dances while balancing twenty wineglasses (and a flower vase, for good measure) on the bridge of her nose. (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 646-223-3010. Nov. 30 at 7, Dec. 1 at 2 and 7, and Dec. 2 at noon and 5. Through Jan. 6.)

BILL T. JONES/ARNIE ZANE DANCE COMPANY

The troupe's semester-long residency at Montclair State University culminates in the première of "A Quarreling Pair." Taking its title and inspiration and part of its script from a Beckett-like puppet play by Jane Bowles about two cohabiting middle-aged sisters, the work jumps off into a Jonesian exploration of the difficulty of living together—civil wars domestic and otherwise. (Alexander Kasser Theatre, Montclair, N.J. Nov. 30 at 7:30, Dec. 1 at 8, and Dec. 2 at 3.)

"WORKS & PROCESS"

The Chinese-born choreographer and artist Shen Wei is known for incantatory stage pictures that are imbued with suggestive patterns that seem to tap into some higher poetic logic. In "Re- (Part One)," a 2006 work inspired by a trip to Tibet, he created a complex mandala out of pieces of paper, the pattern of which was gradually scattered and obliterated by the dancers' movements. At the Guggenheim, Shen and members of his company will discuss and show excerpts from his "Re-" triptych, including Parts Two and Three, which explore Cambodia and the Silk Road. (Fifth Ave. at 89th St. 212-423-3587. Dec. 2-3 at 7:30.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA

The arrival of the charismatic British singers Bryn Terfel and Simon Keenlyside, performing the roles of Figaro and the Count, respectively, is the big news from the Met's ongoing presentation of **"Le Nozze di Figaro."** They are matched, however, by a formidable Countess—the German soprano Anja Harteros, who, in a performance of delicate understatement, nearly walks away with the show; Philippe Jordan's command of the orchestra remains supreme. (Nov. 28 and Dec. 1 at 8. These are the final performances.) ♦ The story of Bellini's **"Norma"** is a beautifully explored love triangle set in Gaul at the time of the Druids. Unfortunately, this magical premise didn't inspire the director John Copley and the designer John Conklin, whose dim production utilizes little more than a daisy chain and pilling robes to make its points. Vocal thrills are intermittent. Franco Farina sings determinedly as Pollione, but only the world-class mezzo-soprano Dolora Zajick, as the young Adalgisa, conquers her role's challenges. (Maria Guleghina, in the title role, has recently joined the cast.) Maurizio Benini conducts. (Nov. 30 and Dec. 4 at 8.) ♦ After several decades of neglect, the Met is returning to the operas of Christoph Willibald Gluck with zealous commitment. Stephen Wadsworth's staging of **"Iphigénie en Tauride,"** the composer's crowning achievement, features Susan Graham, Plácido Domingo, Paul Groves, and William Shimell; Louis Langrée. (Dec. 1 at 1:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

HOLIDAY MUSIC

THE DESSOFF CHOIRS
There is life beyond "Messiah," as this excellent avocational chorus proves: joining the Boy and Girl Choristers of St. Bartholomew's Church, it offers two English Christmas cantatas rarely heard on these shores—Britten's "St. Nicholas" and Finzi's "In Terra Pax." James Bagwell conducts. (Park Ave. at 51st St. 212-378-0248. Dec. 1 at 8.)

MUSIC AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM: CHANTICLEER
A curious crowd throngs to this most delectable of New York holiday offerings: East Side socialites, West Side intellectuals, Midwestern choral fanatics, men-about-town. They all come to get a dose of sonic perfection—delivered in high style—from the incomparable San Francisco men's chorus, which performs an assortment of Renaissance polyphony, seasonal carols, and spirituals amid the majestic intimacy of the Medieval Sculpture Hall. (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949. Dec. 2 and Dec. 4-5 at 6:30 and 8:30.)

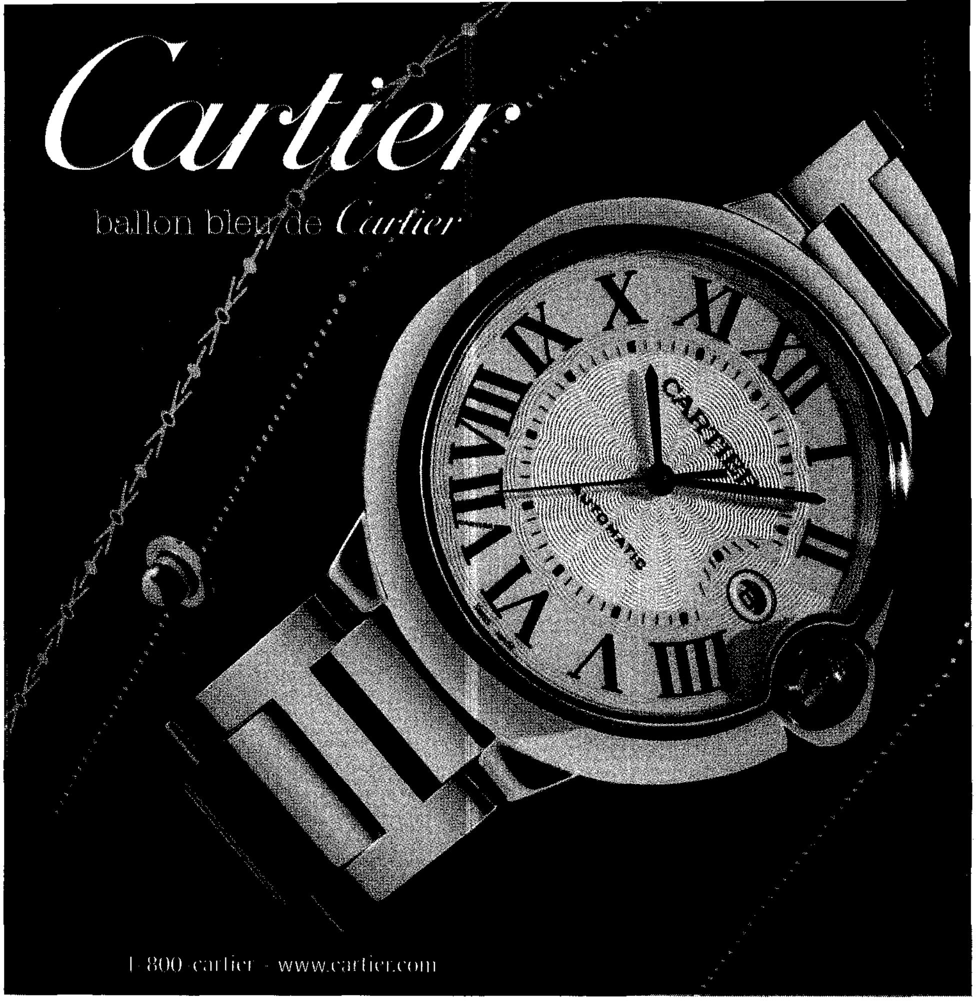
ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

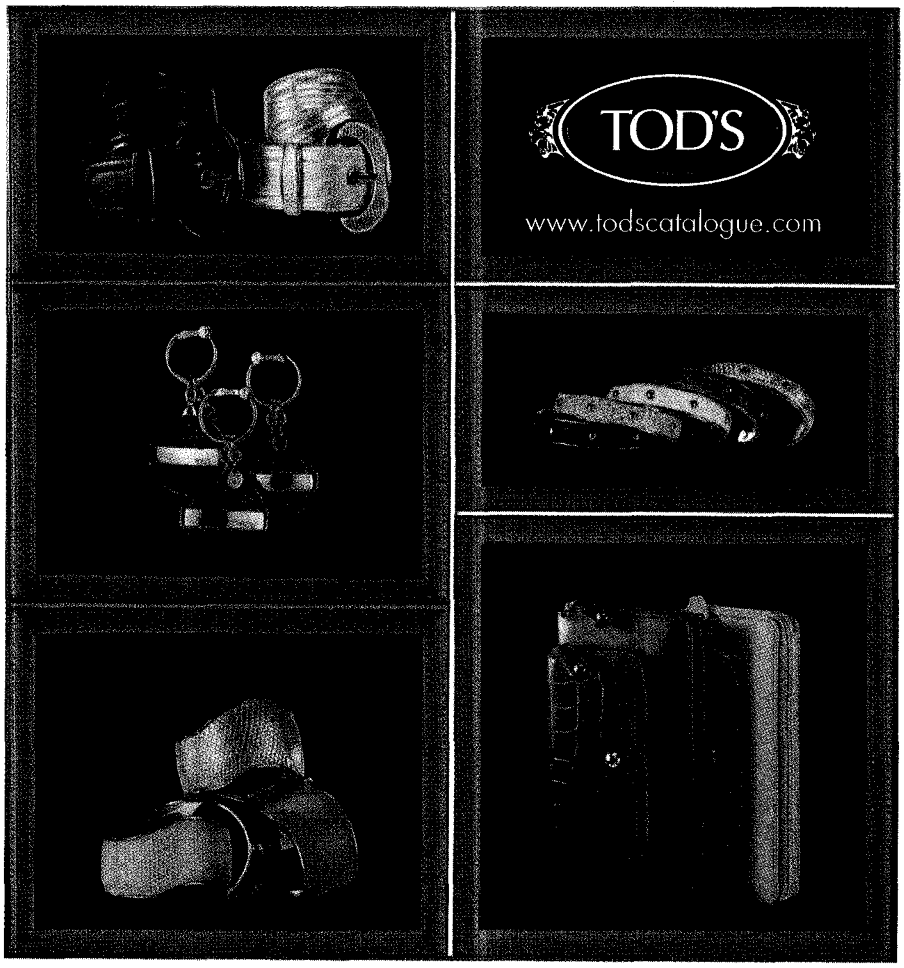
NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Gustavo Dudamel, at twenty-six the most widely hailed conductor of his generation, may have wowed 'em at Carnegie Hall with his Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela, but winning over the formidable ladies and gentlemen of the Philharmonic is another matter entirely. In the most watched début of the year, he makes his first bows at Avery Fisher Hall leading Chávez's Symphony No. 2 ("Sinfonia India"), Dvořák's Violin Concerto (with the reliable Gil Shaham), and Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony. (212-875-5656. Nov. 29 and Dec. 4 at 7:30 and Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 at 8.)

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
With "Berlin in Lights" all done, Simon Rattle—Philadelphia's "man who got away"—spends some quality time with its magnificent but unsettled orchestra, still finding its footing after the startling announcement of the early departure of its music director, Christoph Eschenbach. The single work on the program is straight from the heart: Schumann's oratorio "Paradise and the Peri," also featuring (among other soloists) the soprano Heidi Grant Murphy, the mezzo-soprano Bernarda Fink, the tenor Joseph Kaiser, and the Philadelphia Singers Chorale. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Nov. 30 at 8.)

KIROV ORCHESTRA
Valery Gergiev and his richly expressive (if pitifully overworked) orchestra are always welcome at Carnegie Hall. Their three concerts also feature the Kirov Opera Chorus and vocal soloists from the ranks of St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre. Dec. 1 at 8: Act I of Glinka's "Ruslan and Ludmilla"—the foundation stone of Russian opera—and Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring." ♦ Dec. 2 at 2: Rimsky-Korsakov's "The Snow Maiden," complete. ♦ Dec. 4 at 8: There is nothing quite like Stravinsky's "Les Noces," an aestheticized vision of a Russian village wedding, scored for an orchestra of four pianos and percussion and a myriad of voices. The Kirov forces offer a very rare New York performance of this masterpiece, along with Act II of Borodin's "Prince Igor." (212-247-7800.)

ORCHESTRA BAROCCA CAPPELLA DELLA PIETÀ DEI TURCHINI
The venerable "Music Before 1800" series brings in the Neapolitan chamber orchestra, which is devoted to promoting the great music of its native city. With two solo singers, it offers a selection of operatic arias and sinfonias by Paisiello, Pic-





cinni, and Domenico Scarlatti. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 212-666-9266. Dec. 2 at 4.)

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Renée Fleming is the guest of James Levine's elegant band, taking the solo role in the New York première of an orchestral song cycle by the veteran French master Henri Dutilleux (and in four classic songs by Duparc as well). The concert begins with Berlioz (excerpts from "Roméo et Juliette") and ends with Debussy ("La Mer"). (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Dec. 3 at 8.)

RECITALS

MEASHA BRUEGGERGOSMAN

The vibrant Canadian soprano, who has recently stepped out with a new Bolcom-Satie disk on DG, offers a Zankel Hall recital with the pianist Roger Vignoles. (212-247-7800. Nov. 28 at 7:30.)

TABLES FOR TWO

STONEHOME WINE BAR

SARAH MANGERSON

87 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-624-9443)—The ever-popular wine bar poses something of a categorical conundrum. Many wine bars relegate their foodstuffs to the side—a composed cheese plate here, slender panini there—and seem to be little more than pretentious watering holes. The best, though, like Stonehome Wine Bar, give the culinary as much attention as the oenological. Situated on the garden level of a brownstone in Fort Greene, with stone mosaics, a curving cherrywood bar, and faux-suède seats, it's tucked away but clearly sought out. On a recent Thursday evening at nearly eleven o'clock, there was a full house of drinkers and diners alike—many, it seemed, had wandered by after the Sufjan Stevens performance at BAM and were relieved to find a place for dinner at that hour.

Bill Stenehjem and Rose Hermann, a couple and longtime residents of the neighborhood, opened Stonehome in 2003, and in 2006 they brought in John Gibson, formerly of Veritas and Lucy's of Long Island, as chef. Gibson is certainly unafraid to offer hearty fare with flavors that challenge—and amplify—those of the wine. A fennel salad, delicately doused with orange vinaigrette, featured tangy pickled beets; pork meatballs, bobbing in a bowl of smoked-pork broth and cannellini beans, were rosy in the middle, with just enough Taleggio cheese oozing out. The entrées tend toward the colossal, like the pork shank, which looked almost prehistoric in its heft, and was braised until it fell tenderly from the bone. Thick slices of venison came with creamy, ancho-chile-spiked sweet potatoes and a bitter-chocolate sauce. As for the wine, no flowery descriptions here—recommendations are made straightforwardly, with no extraneous information. A bit more might be nice: when a waiter offered either a Pinot Noir or a Burgundy to accompany the duck, there was little forthcoming about why those two, or what differentiated them. But the choice held up; the Pinot turned out to be tart, almost astringent, and it cut nicely through the richness of the fowl.

No wonder diners came in all sorts of configurations—couples, young and old, in various stages of infatuation; a group of Germans, caught up in some urgent debate; a trio of twenty-something women, picking at a cheese plate. One, sipping a glass of Chardonnay, said wonderingly, "Can you believe that in college all I ever ate were bagels and ramen?" (Open daily for dinner. Entrées $16-$22.)

—*Andrea Thompson*

CHRISTIAN TETZLAFF AND ALEXANDER LONQUICH

The commanding young German artists—on violin and piano, respectively—offer a complete, chronological survey of Beethoven's Sonatas for Violin and Piano at the 92nd Street Y. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Nov. 29 at 8, Dec. 2 at 3, and Dec. 4 at 8. For details, see www.92y.org.)

BARGEMUSIC

The Williams Chamber Players, continuing the barge's series of concerts of contemporary American music, offer a range of appealing works for violin, percussion, and piano by such composers as André Previn, John Corigliano (the Chaconne from "The Red Violin," made famous by Joshua Bell), and Frederic Rzewski ("Whangdoodles"). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083. Nov. 30 at 8. For full schedule, see www.bargemusic.org.)

MUSIC AT THE FRICK COLLECTION: ALAIN PLANÈS

The Frick's domed auditorium often hosts the New York débuts of young European artists, but Planès, an experienced French pianist, is already a known quantity because of his distinctive series of Haydn recordings. That composer's Sonata No. 31 in A-Flat Major begins the recital, which continues with works by Schubert, Debussy ("Estampes"), and Janáček ("On an Overgrown Path"). (212-547-0715. Dec. 2 at 5.)

MATTHEW POLENZANI

One of the Met's most reliable tenors, especially in lighter-weight repertory, teams up with the pianist Julius Drake in songs by Schubert, Beethoven (the cycle "An die Ferne Geliebte"), Liszt, and Britten ("Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo"). (Rose Theatre, Broadway at 60th St. 212-721-6500. Dec. 2 at 5.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

If chamber music is the most intimate and intelligent of classical genres, then Bach's "Art of Fugue" certainly fits the bill. Originally written without fixed instrumentation, it will be performed by the Orion String Quartet with the wind quintet Windscape, in an arrangement by the revered late flutist Samuel Baron. (New York Society for Ethical Culture, 2 W. 64th St. 212-875-5788. Dec. 4 at 7:30.)

TRIO MEDIEVAL

The eerily beautiful female vocal trio—which gives early music a lustrous modern gloss—performs a set of ancient Norwegian folk songs at Weill Recital Hall. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Dec. 4 at 7:30.)

MOVIES OPENING

BADLAND

Francesco Lucente directed this drama, about a veteran of the Iraq war who has trouble readjusting to life at home. Opening Nov. 30. (Empire 25.)

CHRONICLE OF AN ESCAPE

A true-life drama about prisoners who escape from a secret prison in Argentina during the "dirty war" of the nineteen-seventies and eighties. Directed by Adrián Caetano. In Spanish. Opening Nov. 30. (IFC Center.)

THE DIVING BELL AND THE BUTTERFLY

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 30. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

OSWALD'S GHOST

Robert Stone directed this documentary, about the assassination of John F. Kennedy and its cultural significance. Opening Nov. 30. (Cinema Village.)

PROTAGONIST

A documentary by Jessica Yu, about four men, unknown to each other, who seek adventure. Opening Nov. 30. (IFC Center.)

THE SAVAGES

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 28. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

65 REVISITED

The director D. A. Pennebaker reworks the outtakes from "Don't Look Back," his documentary about Bob Dylan's British tour in 1965. Opening Nov. 28. (IFC Center.)

NOW PLAYING

AMERICAN GANGSTER

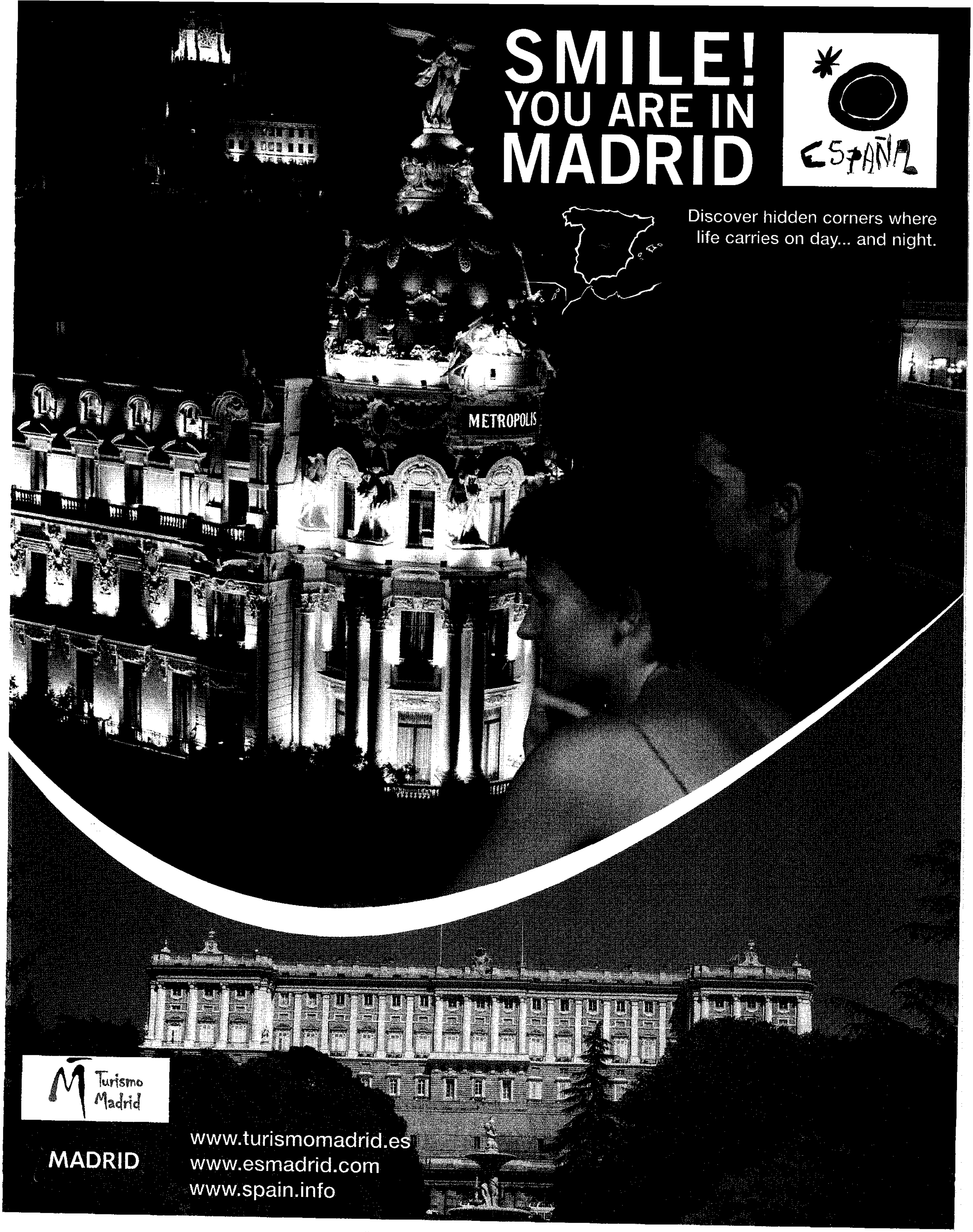
Dazzling, swift-moving, shallow. We see the rise of the real-life Harlem gangster Frank Lucas (Denzel Washington), who in 1968 went to northern Thailand, purchased uncut heroin, shipped it to New York, and sold it on the streets at twice the strength and half the price of what the Mafia was selling. Like many modern gangsters, Frank wants to lead an orderly and loving family life and to keep it untainted by what he does. Opposing Frank is the real-life police detective Richie Roberts (Russell Crowe), who hunts Frank down with a group of irregulars (that is, honest cops) operating out of Essex County, New Jersey. "American Gangster" has been directed by Ridley Scott with great panache and drive. But the portrait of Frank never goes beyond admiration of his cleverness, his style, and his entrepreneurial skill, and one comes away with such sour questions as "Why is it supposed to be better that hundreds—maybe thousands—of lives were destroyed in Harlem by black rather than Italian gangsters?"—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 11/5/07.) (In wide release.)

AUGUST RUSH

Some lovely acting and the director Kirsten Sheridan's gentle touch are the saving graces of this high-concept fairy tale, about the power of music to bring a family together. The story, told out of sequence, involves Evan, a.k.a. August Rush (the excellent Freddie Highmore), an orphan who believes that if he listens to the music in the sounds around him his parents will find him; his mother, Lyla (Keri Russell), a cellist who doesn't know that August was given up for adoption (she thinks he died); his father, Louis (Jonathan Rhys Meyers), an alt-rock singer who had one beautiful night with Lyla; and Wizard (a sufficiently menacing Robin Williams), a vagabond who wants to make a buck off August. The uninspired, generic Hollywood score often makes the premise feel preposterous rather than moving, but there are some high points, including a gorgeous Michael Hedges tune that gets passed off as an original by August (which he plays the first time he picks up a guitar) and a gospel number featuring a solo by the preternaturally gifted young singer Jamia Simone Nash.—*Shauna Lyon* (In wide release.)

BEOWULF

The epic poem gets a tepid retelling in the director Robert Zemeckis's motion-capture picture. The process involves digitizing the actors' performances and computer-generating the sets and the backgrounds. The heightened "realism" gained through this device is outweighed by the jumpiness and the loss of fluidity—the technique offers more punch than poetry. The screenwriters (Neil Gaiman and Roger Avary) have loosely



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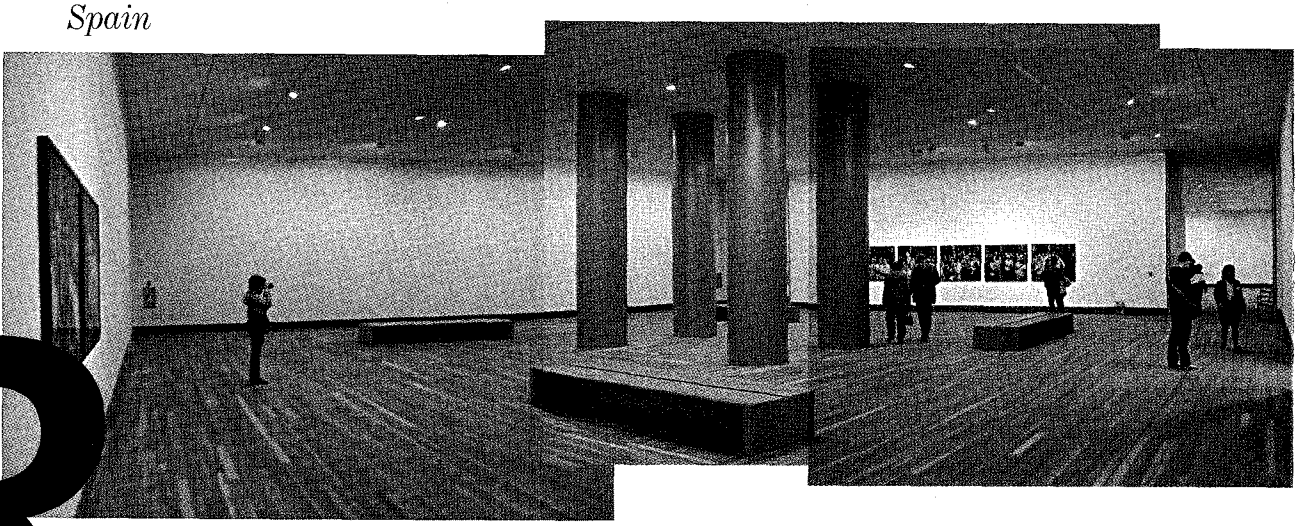

Revel in Madrid

Spain's lively, cosmopolitan capital has a well-earned reputation for offering some of Europe's best night life and cuisine. Revelers from around the world come to celebrate in style at the city's avant-garde dance clubs, intimate bars, chic restaurants, and romantic cafés.

The customary way to kick off an evening is with cocktails and tapas, small dishes of olives, cheese, sausages, and other specialties that sate the appetite before notoriously nocturnal Madrileños eat dinner. Some of Madrid's most popular tapas restaurants are along Calle Cava Baja just south of the Plaza Mayor, where **Taberna Tempranillo** serves these typical treats. **El Bocaíto** in the bohemian Chueca neighborhood is another favorite destination on the tapeo—a multi-stop tapas feast.

After barhopping, friends meet for a leisurely dinner, often not until after 9 P.M. Choosing a restaurant may be one of the tougher decisions of the evening, but a few notable options are **La Broche**, which offers a creative twist on Catalan cooking, **El Amparo**, a Basque favorite, and **Viejo Madrid**, known for its traditional Spanish cuisine.

Besides its vibrant dining scene, Madrid offers a wide range of cultural activities. The prestigious **Teatro Real** hosts concerts and operas throughout the year, and **La Plaza de Toros de Las Ventas**, Madrid's legendary bullring, is also a popular venue for rock concerts and shows.

As dinner winds down and performances end, the citywide party moves into high gear. Crowds gather at clubs around midnight, and everyone dresses up to dance until dawn—locals rarely wear jeans or sneakers to bars and clubs. The grand finale to a night on the town is the typical breakfast ritual: thick, hot chocolate and sweet, fried *churros.*

By day, Madrid has exceptional museums to explore. This fall, the **Prado Museum** unveiled its grand new extension, nearly doubling its size. Designed by architect Rafael Moneo, the enlarged Prado features new galleries and even additional buildings that have been incorporated into the museum, including the restored Cloister of the Jerónimos. The Prado is inaugurating the new space with an exhibition featuring nineteenth-century Spanish artists such as Goya, Madrazo, and Sorolla, on view through April 24th.

Also along the Paseo del Prado, the **Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum** has two of the top private collections of twentieth-century art, with works by Titian, Kandinsky, and Rothko among other museum highlights. Completing Madrid's "Golden Triangle of Art," the **Reina Sofia National Art Museum** specializes in Spanish works—Picasso's "Guernica" is part of the permanent collection. Day or night, visitors can revel in the treasures of this multicultural city.

PHOTOS: NEW EXTENSION OF THE PRADO MUSEUM ©ARQTIPO
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adapted the story, about a warrior Viking, Beowulf (Ray Winstone), who slays the monster Grendel (gutturally voiced by Crispin Glover) and becomes a king. By removing the poem's religious overtones and Scandinavian myths, the filmmakers have opted for a more modern focus: how power corrupts. Although the feats of derring-do are impressive (especially in the startling 3-D prints), the dialogue is dull and stilted. The dreary look (torches, for the most part, light the action) further robs the movie of thrills. With Angelina Jolie.—*Bruce Diones* (In wide release.)

ENCHANTED

Disney fights back. After years of seeing its animated features outclassed by the competition—not least from Pixar, its own subsidiary—the company has realized that its strength lies in plundering its back catalogue and making sport with the spoils. Hence Kevin Lima's new film, which starts in a cartoon kingdom (an unabashed homage to early Disney, exploding with anthropomorphism) and suddenly spirits its main characters into the real world—or, at any rate, into a New York where people sing on cue, and where a divorce lawyer (Patrick Dempsey) can discover his inner warmth. So, not that real. But the conceit is smartly wrought, so much so that the attempts at comic relief (using a C.G.I. chipmunk, and with Timothy Spall as a henchman) seem not just lumpen but superfluous. Happily, the leads carry the day: James Marsden as a prince of grinning vanity, Susan Sarandon as the wicked stepmother (although the climax turns her into something else, again unnecessarily), and, above all, Amy Adams, who, in the role of a would-be princess, finds true momentum, not just sappiness, in the farce of innocence. With songs by Alan Menken and Stephen Schwartz.—*Anthony Lane* (In wide release.)

I'M NOT THERE

On the principle that the range and mutability of Bob Dylan's music defy classification, and that his own character has been an amalgam of selves, this new Todd Haynes movie assigns six separate actors—Marcus Carl Franklin, Ben Whishaw, Heath Ledger, Christian Bale, Richard Gere, and Cate Blanchett—to play variations, as it were, on the theme of being Dylan. Of the six, only the first and last make an enduring impact—Franklin with his smile and brio, Blanchett with the audacity of her transformation into a curly-haired, mumbling male sage. The other performers are smothered by the central conceit, which may well exasperate aficionados while baffling the unconverted; the real Dylan is never spoken of, and his songs have to fight for space amid the mythmaking and speculation. In particular, the section with Gere, who moseys around a doomed Western town in the role of Billy the Kid, feels richly redundant to the project. Haynes's fans, at least, will be gratified to find his command of light and color undiminished. With Bruce Greenwood in fine form as a quizzical journalist.—*A.L.* (11/26/07) (In wide release.)

LIONS FOR LAMBS

Not so much a coherent movie as a triptych of related tales, two of them dangerously static. In Washington, an experienced liberal reporter (Meryl Streep) goes head to head with an eager young senator (Tom Cruise), who is backing a new military push in Afghanistan. In California, a college professor (Robert Redford) tries to spur a feckless student (Andrew Garfield) to involve himself more boldly in the world, whatever form that involvement may take. And in Afghanistan itself a couple of the professor's former students (Derek Luke and Michael Peña), now serving with the American forces, find themselves stranded on a dark hillside with the enemy approaching. The soldiers' predicament, to which we return throughout the film, is intended to dramatize the issues being debated back home, although their heroism has few political implications, being more an example of indissoluble friendship. In short, the movie, written by Matthew Michael Carnahan and directed by Redford, has all the indignation of a wake-up call but no clear idea about what we should be doing once awake. By a pleasing irony, Tom Cruise, turning his terrifying smile up to maximum, emerges as the most convincing figure in sight. Was that really part of the plan?—*A.L.* (11/12/07) (In wide release.)

LOVE IN THE TIME OF CHOLERA

Mike Newell's adaptation of Gabriel García Márquez's great 1985 novel is a well-crafted and handsome period piece; it's pleasant enough, but it has nothing of Márquez's richly allusive style or his comic-extravagant realization of obsessional love. Newell doesn't paint with the camera; he's a realist who competently frames a mixed set of performances. Giovanna Mezzogiorno is the belle of late-nineteenth-century Cartagena, Colombia; Benjamin Bratt, looking good in a goatee, a high, floating collar, and a black cutaway, is the aristocratic doctor she marries; and Javier Bardem, misdirected, is the poet turned ship owner who pines after her for decades. The woebegone Bardem drags himself about the city with his shoulders sagging; the many scenes of women pulling him into bed are puzzling in the extreme. He's so stricken that women, we imagine, would be more likely to take him home and give him some hot *sopa de pollo* instead.—*D.D.* (11/19/07) (In wide release.)

LOVE ME TONIGHT

Cleverness squared equals brilliance in this scintillating 1932 musical comedy, starring Maurice Chevalier as an amorous tailor and Jeanette MacDonald as a princess who thinks he's a nobleman. The collaboration between the film's director, the visual stylist Rouben Mamoulian, and the songwriters Rodgers and Hart has a feathery dexterity. After Chevalier starts to sing "Isn't It Romantic" in his Paris shop, the number gets continued by others in a cab and on a troop train, on a march and in a Gypsy camp, until it's picked up by MacDonald on her balcony; it's a blissful expression of love as a feeling that can span a country and wed opposites. Chevalier is ebullient, MacDonald ardent and at ease with her own sensational figure. The cast includes the witty, gorgeous Myrna Loy as a man-hungry aristocrat and Hollywood's favorite upper-crust patriarch, C. Aubrey Smith, who, in one of many strokes of comic ingenuity, warbles a verse or two of "Mimi."—*Michael Sragow* (French Institute Alliance Française; Dec. 4.)

MARGOT AT THE WEDDING

There are many ways of frustrating and boring an audience, but setting up a bunch of characters who are so inept that they can't hit a croquet ball, or run through the woods without tripping, or chop down a tree without its landing on a wedding tent may be the most infuriating way of all. Noah Baumbach's new movie is about a family that can't do anything right. Margot (Nicole Kidman), a novelist with a disconcerting habit of sticking a verbal knife into people, shows up at the house of her unhappy sister, Pauline (Jennifer Jason Leigh), who is about to marry an out-of-work rocker (Jack Black). Misery, confusion, and much stumbling about ensue. Baumbach has modelled the movie on Bergman's lacerating isolated-island pictures, but, unlike Bergman, he hasn't worked out the struggle between speaking and withholding. People simply blurt out scathing remarks or behave badly, so there's little power in the various revelations and betrayals. The leafless, unbeautiful island is monochromatic. Even nature seems like a flop.—*D.D.* (11/19/07) (In wide release.)

THE MIST

It takes nerve, and a certain style, for the director of "The Shawshank Redemption" to make a horror film in which almost nothing is redeemable, but that is what Frank Darabont has done. A small town in Maine is invaded by thick mist, under cover of which lurk misshapen creatures—the outcome, we vaguely learn, of wayward military experiments. As if determined to stock up on groceries, they lay siege to a supermarket, where a crowd of locals has found refuge. These include some reassuringly familiar types, such as

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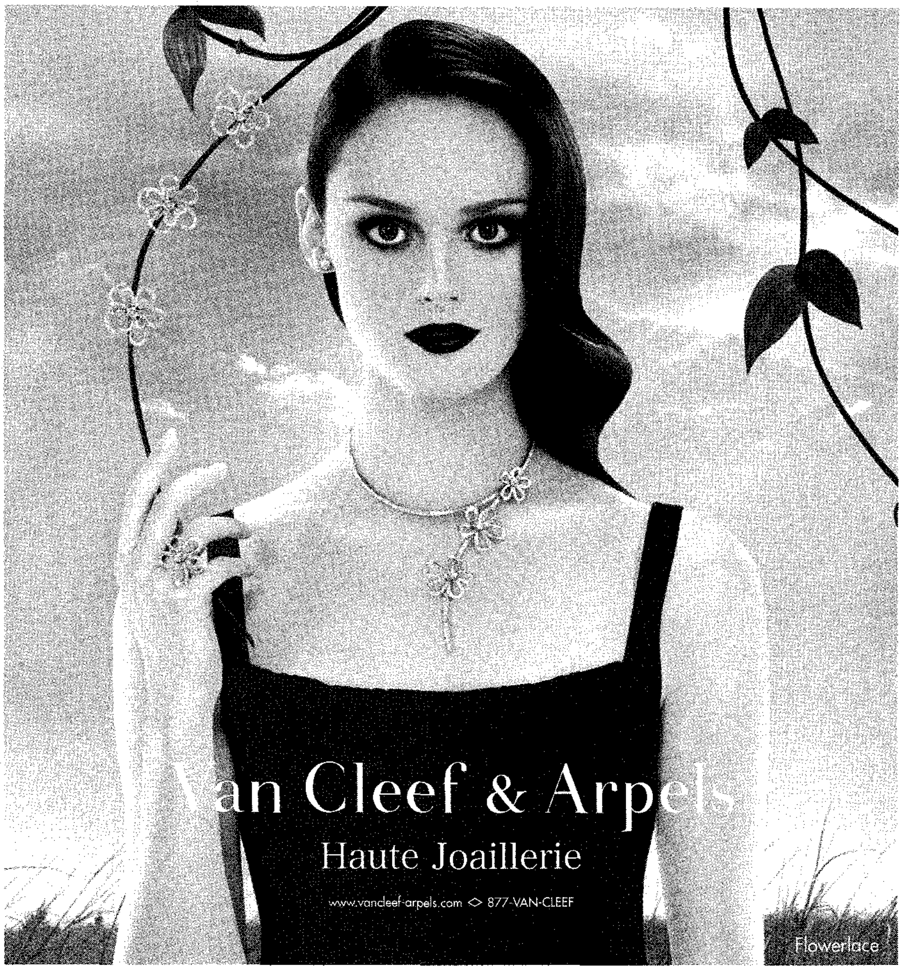

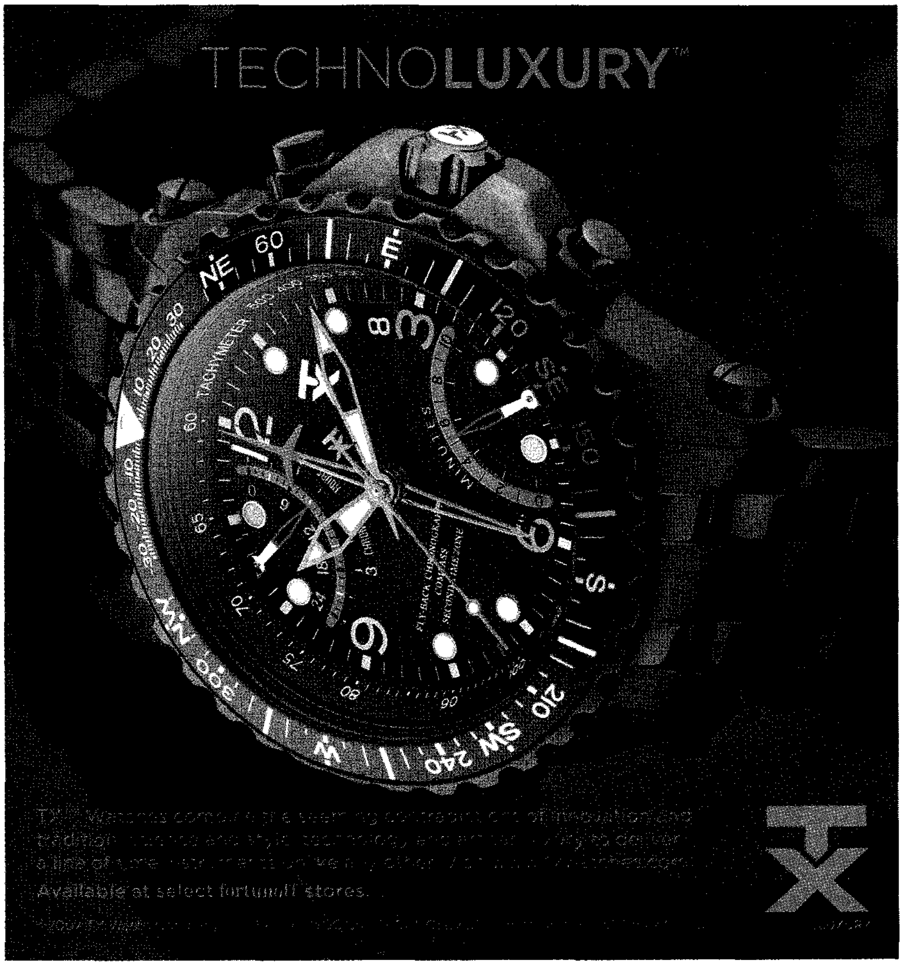

the heroic pragmatist (Thomas Jane), the consoling schoolteacher (Laurie Holden), the finger-pointing nutcase (Marcia Gay Harden), and the skeptic (Andre Braugher) who refuses to believe in giant, writhing flesh-eaters right up to the moment at which he meets them socially. The result, adapted from a story by Stephen King, is well paced, and blood is shed in careful moderation, but do not be fooled by the anguish of the climax; this is the true, B-movie mixture of shocks and silliness, and is all the better for it.—*A.L.* (11/26/07) (In wide release.)

NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN
The new movie by the Coen brothers is adapted from Cormac McCarthy's novel of the same name. Javier Bardem, his menace half-masked by a comical haircut, plays a calm, unstoppable psychopath on the trail of a stolen two million dollars. (His presence is both frightening and entertaining, if never wholly credible.) Various unfortunates cross his path and suffer the consequences, but his principal target is Llewelyn Moss (Josh Brolin), a passing hunter who took the money. Following them both is Sheriff Bell (Tommy Lee Jones), who seems in no particular hurry, and whose ruminations on crimes past and present committed in this desolate part of Texas are spoken in a gravelly voice-over. The movie, photographed by Roger Deakins, is almost stately in its ominous control, drawing us into the minutiae of mayhem and revenge. What other filmmakers would devote an extended scene to the stashing of booty in a ventilation shaft? The result is oddly unemotional, as if a vicious game were being played by solemn rules, with barely a flicker of interest in the characters' moral plight. Only Kelly Macdonald, in her beautifully judged (and accented) performance as Moss's wife, begins to restore the balance. With Woody Harrelson.—*A.L.* (11/12/07) (In wide release.)

REDACTED
Brian De Palma's movie is based on actual events—the rape and murder, near Baghdad, in March, 2006, of a fourteen-year-old girl, and the murder of her family as well, by five members of an American Army platoon. De Palma has made a fiction out of the events, creating characters and situations whose precise nature he inferred from soldiers' accounts, blogs, and news reports. And he has assembled his fiction from a variety of fictionalized documentary forms: a video diary made by one of the soldiers, a terrorist Web site showing the murder of the platoon's master sergeant, a portentous French documentary complete with stern Baroque music, and so on. Some of the men are in terrible shape—scared and trigger-happy, and quick to launch the ritual accusations of faggotry or pussydom at anyone in the platoon who doesn't want to do something violent. Watching these guys through one lens or another is fascinating but hellish. One longs for a unifying point of view, but De Palma's idea is that such an experience can no longer simply be told but must be pieced together from clumsy, off-center representations, all of which are guilty in some way. The spectrum runs from impotent observation (the French documentary) to complicity (the soldier's video diary) to actual violence (the terrorist Web site). In all, the movie is a grimly mischievous emblem of our media-haunted world.—*D.D.* (11/19/07) (In wide release.)

LA RICOTTA
In 1962, the Italian director Pier Paolo Pasolini, whose first films were latter-day variants on neorealism, took a flying leap into hectic modernity with this short, apocalyptic screed against the habits of professional filmmaking and the un-Christian coldness of modern Christendom. Orson Welles plays a director who is filming the Passion on a hillside near Rome. Stracci (Mario Cipriani), the extra who plays the repentant thief, craves ricotta for his meagre sustenance but can't afford it, and, to get it, he becomes, in real life, a thief. The on-set sequences are savagely satirical, as a diva feeds her dog caviar while Stracci

looks on, actors in the Crucifixion scene pick their noses or laugh at inappropriate moments, and crew members call out for the crown of thorns as if it were hardware. Welles gives a pithy interview to a visiting journalist in which he delivers Pasolini's own creed as a Marxist and a Catholic; and Stracci, the real Christ among men, suffers an intimate scourging of Biblical proportions when he is mocked by the crew as he lies on the Cross and awaits his scene. With such disruptive devices as intercutting color and black-and-white footage, parodying silent-film antics, and inserting scenes of youths dancing the twist, Pasolini both claims the heritage of the French New Wave and conveys his sense of a time out of joint.—*Richard Brody* (Walter Reade; Dec. 2 and Dec. 4.)

SOUTHLAND TALES
Richard Kelly follows up "Donnie Darko" with this incoherent apocalyptic satire set in Los Angeles in 2008. The Rock, a.k.a. Dwayne Johnson, plays an action hero whose memory has been erased, Sarah Michelle Gellar is a porn star with a business plan, Seann William Scott is an ex-soldier who has been brainwashed by a band of vaguely political mischief-makers that includes Cheri Oteri and Amy Poehler, and Justin Timberlake sits mysteriously atop a beach shack manning a huge gun. Kelly seems to want to talk about terrorism, global warming, politics, Iraq, and the film business, and he sustains an ironic tone that would have been much more interesting if there were an intelligible story; instead he has assembled a glossy, inchoate mess.—*S.L.* (Angelika Film Center and Empire 25.)

XALA
The opening sequence of Ousmane Sembene's bitter satire, from 1974, shows Africans taking over the Dakar Chamber of Commerce from its European overlords—and then exchanging their garb for suits, speaking in French instead of Wolof, and happily accepting briefcases full of money from the remaining French administrator. Sembene's righteous political anger finds indigenous targets as well, including the one that launches the drama: the practice of polygamy, endorsed by local Islamic customs. El Hadj (Thierno Laye), a corrupt businessman who sits on the council, takes a third wife (to the great dismay of his other two) but suddenly—under a curse, or *xala*—becomes impotent and fails to consummate the marriage. He scurries to shamans (one, comically, has him crawl to his new wife with a talisman between his teeth), but superstition proves to be just another form of blindness to the underlying ills—his own and those of African society at large. In Sembene's view, a corrupt system merely replaced white dictators and profiteers with black ones; the symbolic ending, a glimmer of revolutionary hope, is as morally gratifying as it is implausible. In French and Wolof.—*R.B.* (Film Forum; Nov. 30-Dec. 1.)

Also Playing

BEFORE THE DEVIL KNOWS YOU'RE DEAD: In wide release. **DAN IN REAL LIFE:** In wide release. **THE DARJEELING LIMITED:** In wide release. **GONE BABY GONE:** In wide release.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—Through Dec. 6: African Diaspora Film Festival. (For complete listings, visit www.nyadff.org.) Nov. 29 at 4: "Night Shadows" (2006, Nasser Bakhti; in Arabic, French, German, Italian, and Soninke dialect). ♦ Nov. 30 at 5:30: "Greensboro: Closer to the Truth" (2007, Adam Zucker). ♦ Dec. 2 at 7:45: "A River" (2005, José Carlos de Oliveira; in Portuguese). ♦ The films of Jerzy Skolimowski. Except where noted, all films are in Polish. Nov. 30 at 7 and Dec. 4 at 9:15: "Iden-

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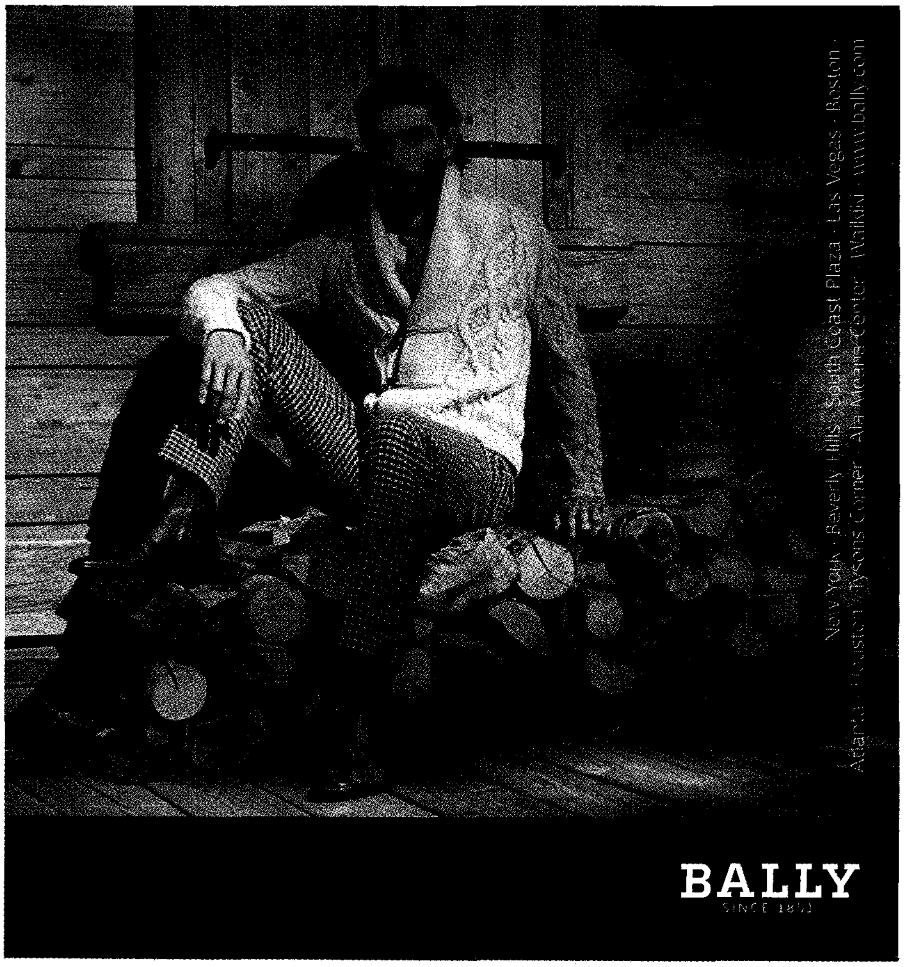

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tification Marks: None" (1964). ♦ Nov. 30 at 9:15 and Dec. 2 at 7: "Walkover" (1965). ♦ Dec. 1 at 3 and Dec. 2 at 5: "Against the Clock: Skolimowski, Filmmaker, Painter, Poet" (2003, Damien Bertrand) and short films. ♦ Dec. 1 at 5 and Dec. 5 at 9:15: "Innocent Sorcerers" (1960, Andrzej Wajda). ♦ Dec. 1 at 7 and Dec. 3 at 9:15: "Barrier" (1966). ♦ Dec. 1 at 9:30 and Dec. 3 at 7: "Hands Up!" (1967). ♦ Dec. 4 at 7: "Moonlighting" (1982; in English). ♦ Dec. 2 at 9:30 and Dec. 5 at 7: "Le Départ" (1967; in French).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—Through Dec. 18: The films of Max Ophüls. Nov. 28-29 at 7:30 and 9:30, Nov. 30-Dec. 2 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15, and Dec. 3-4 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Letter from an Unknown Woman" (1948).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Special screenings. Nov. 28-29 at 1, 4:35, and 8:15: "Who Is Norman Lloyd?" (2007, Matthew Sussman). ♦ Nov. 28-29 at 2:30, 6:10, and 9:45: "Saboteur" (1942, Alfred Hitchcock). ♦ Through Dec. 13: The films of Ousmane Sembene. Nov. 30-Dec. 1 at 2, 4:20, 7, and 9:20: "Xala" (†). ♦ Dec. 2-3 at 2, 4:25, 6:50, and 9:15: "Moolaadé" (2005; in Bambara and French). ♦ Dec. 4 at 2, 4:20, 6:40, and 9: "Ceddo" (1977; in French and Wolof).

FRENCH INSTITUTE ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE
Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—"Fashion Icons." Dec. 4 at 12:30 and 7: "French Cancan" (1954, Jean Renoir; in French). ♦ Dec. 4 at 4 and 9: "Love Me Tonight" (†).

IFC CENTER
323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—In revival. Nov. 30-Dec. 2 at noon: "Sansho the Bailiff" (1954, Kenji Mizoguchi; in Japanese). ♦ "Waverly Midnights." Nov. 30-Dec. 2: "Tony & Tina's Wedding" (2007, Roger Paradiso).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—"Still Moving." Nov. 28-30 at 1:30: "Yi Yi" (2000, Edward Yang; in Mandarin). ♦ Special screening. Nov. 28 at 6: Digital works by Ernie Gehr, including "Glider" (2001). ♦ "Collaborations in the Collection." Dec. 1 at 2: "The Smiling Lieutenant" (1931, Ernst Lubitsch). ♦ Dec. 1 at 4: "Broken Lullaby (The Man I Killed)" (1932, Lubitsch). ♦ Dec. 1 at 6: "Trouble in Paradise" (1932, Lubitsch). ♦ Dec. 2 at 2: "Fallen Angels" (1995, Wong Kar-Wai; in Cantonese). ♦ Dec. 2 at 4: "Happy Together" (1997, Wong; in Mandarin, Cantonese, and Spanish). ♦ "Treasures III: Social Issues in American Film." All films are silent. Dec. 2 at 2: "The Soul of Youth" (1920, William Desmond Taylor). ♦ Dec. 2 at 4: "The Godless Girl" (1928, Cecil B. De Mille). ♦ Special event. Dec. 3 at 7: "An Evening with Lida Abdul."

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—"Glorious Technicolor!" Dec. 1 at 3: "All That Heaven Allows" (1955, Douglas Sirk). ♦ Dec. 1 at 6: "The Gang's All Here" (1943, Busby Berkeley). ♦ Dec. 2 at 2: "Vertigo" (1958, Alfred Hitchcock). ♦ Dec. 2 at 5: "Apocalypse Now Redux" (1979, Francis Ford Coppola).

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—"Cabaret Cinema." Nov. 30 at 9:30: "Tom Jones" (1963, Tony Richardson), introduced by the writer Thomas Cahill.

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—The films of Pier Paolo Pasolini. All films are in Italian. Nov. 28 at 1:45 and 7 and Dec. 2 at 8:30: "Mamma Roma" (1962). ♦ Nov. 28 at 4, Nov. 29 at 9, and Dec. 1 at 5: "Accatone" (1961). ♦ Nov. 28 at 9:30 and Nov. 29 at 4:15: "The Hawks and the Sparrows" (1966). ♦ Nov. 29 at 1:30 and 6:15 and Dec. 3 at 2: "The Gospel According to St. Matthew" (1964). ♦ Dec. 1 at 7:20 and Dec. 4 at 2:45: "Pigpen" (1969). ♦ Dec. 1 at 9:20 and Dec. 2 at 6:15: "Teorema" (1968). ♦ Dec. 2 at 2 and Dec. 4 at 4:45: "La Ricotta" (†) and "La Rabbia" (1963). ♦ Dec. 2 at 4 and Dec. 3 at 8: "Salò" (1975). ♦ Dec. 4 at 1 and 6:45: "Notes Toward

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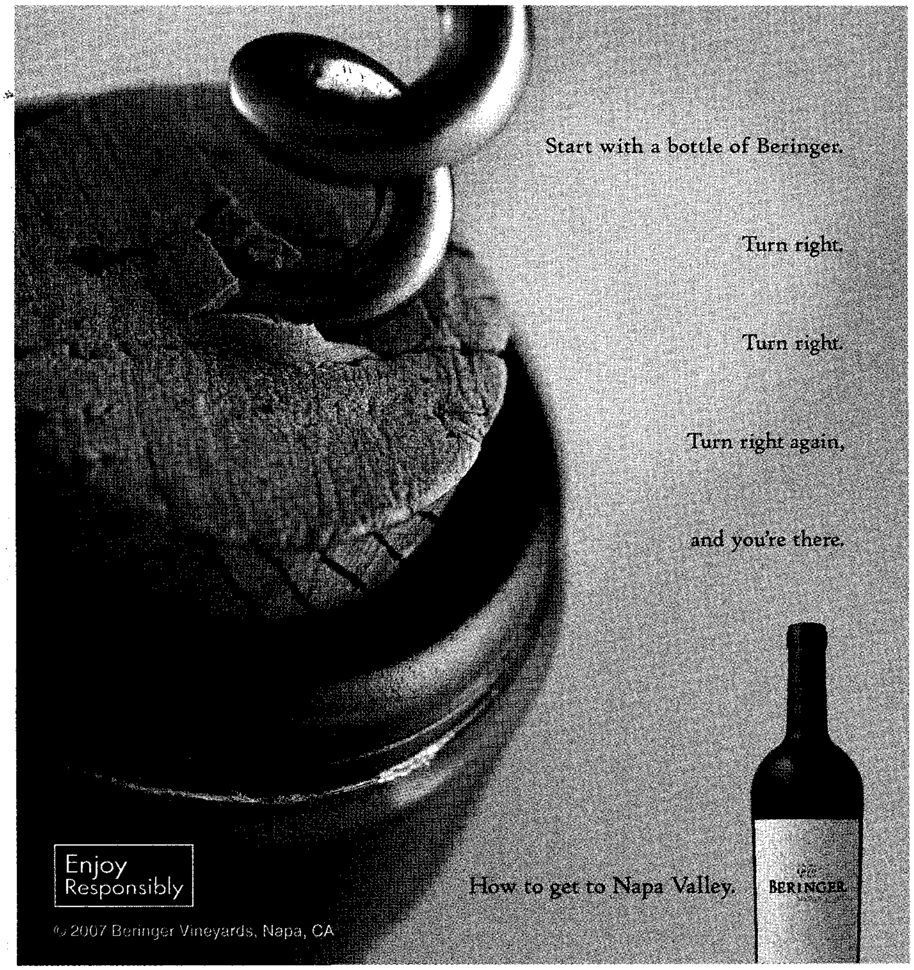
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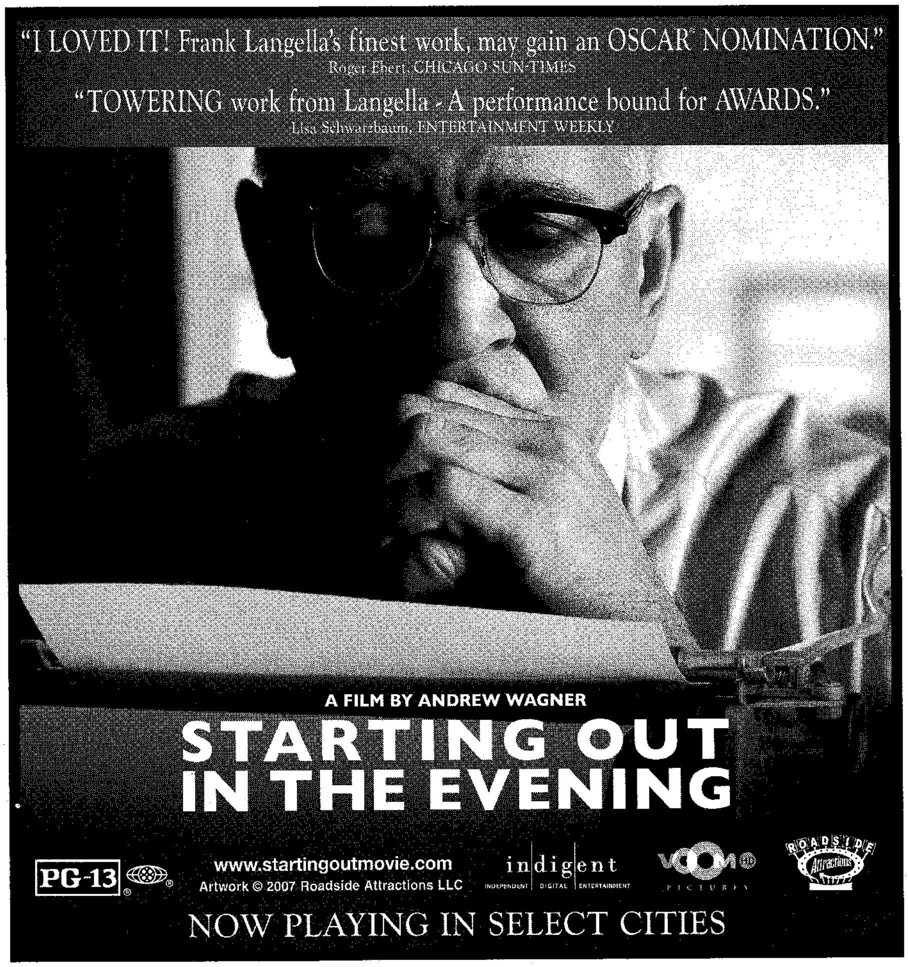
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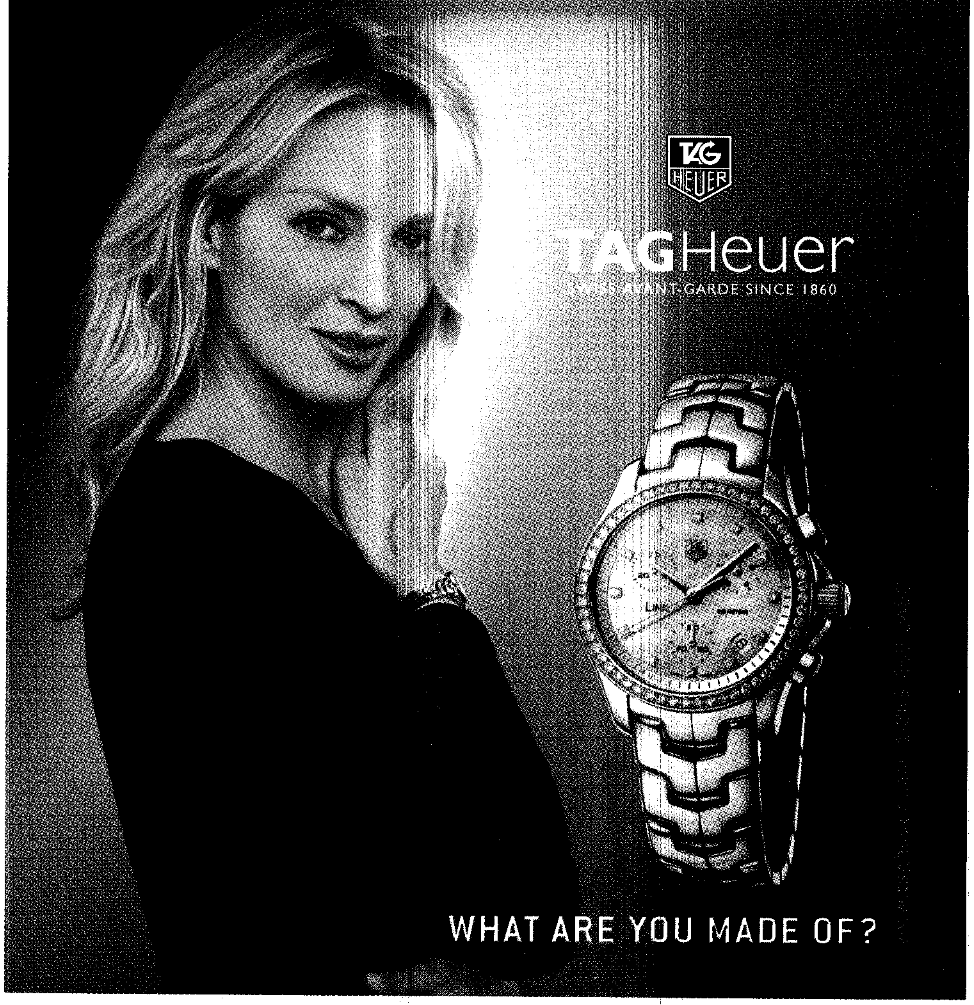
CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
PLAY IT AGAIN

In 1948, at the height of Hollywood's infatuation with Europe and classical music, the German-émigré director Max Ophüls and the screenwriter Howard Koch adapted a story by Stefan Zweig, which they turned into the magnificent tearjerker "Letter from an Unknown Woman." Joan Fontaine plays an impressionable Viennese girl who falls in love with a handsome young classical pianist (Louis Jourdan). He seduces her and then leaves. Years go by, during which she raises their son. Then they meet once more and, having forgotten her, he attempts to seduce her all over again. Ophüls's camera sweeps seamlessly in and out of rooms, up and down stairways. The shadows are dark, the rain glistens, and everyone's manners are exquisite; one couldn't reasonably ask for anything more. What's surprising is how good the two stars are in their kitschy roles—Jourdan polite, insatiable, self-destructive; Fontaine tremulous as always but with bursts of happiness so radiant that she redeems the material from its hapless, masochistic romanticism. Playing at BAM Nov. 28-Dec. 4.

—*David Denby*



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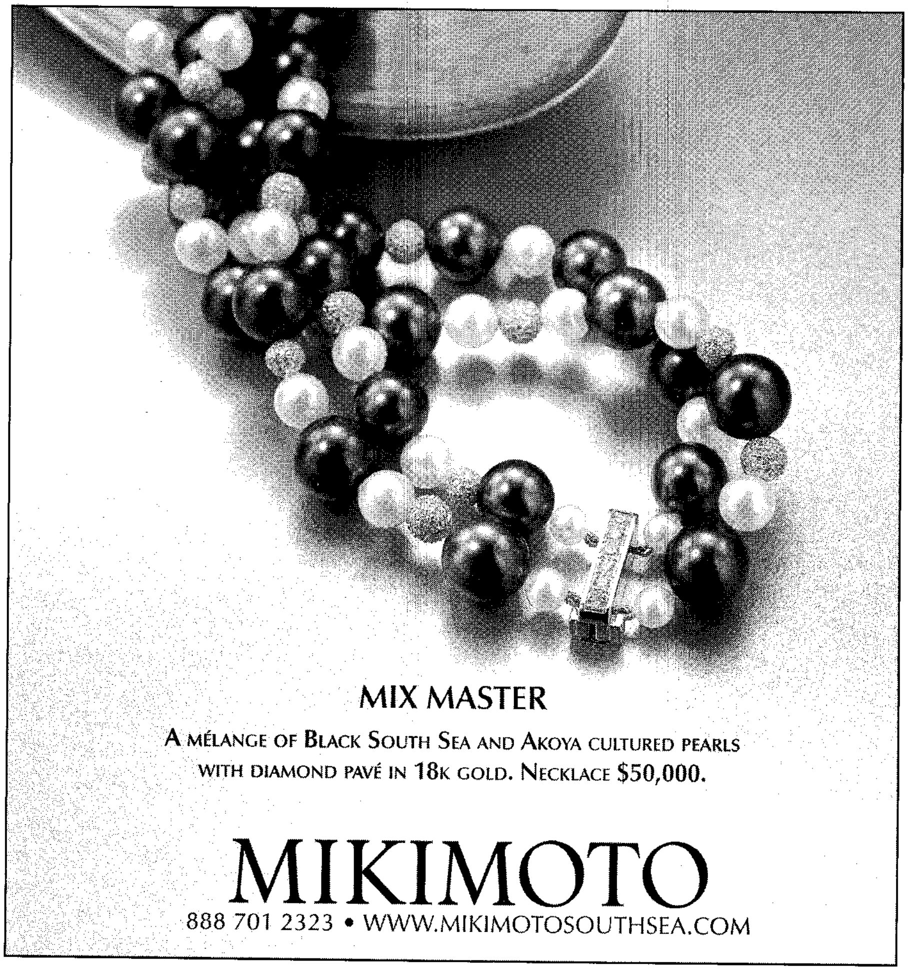

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an African Orestes" (1970) and "The Walls of Sana'a" (1964). ♦ Special screening. Nov. 30 at 7: "Battling Butler" (1926, Buster Keaton; silent) and "Felix the Cat in Sure-Locked Homes" (1928, Otto Messmer; silent).

READINGS AND TALKS

STELLA ADLER STUDIO OF ACTING
The poets Susan Wheeler and C. K. Williams read from their work. (31 W. 27th St., 3rd fl. 212-689-0087. Nov. 29 at 6:30.)

PHILIP LEVINE BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE
The autoworker turned poet celebrates his eightieth, joined by Kate Daniels, E. L. Doctorow, Galway Kinnell, Edward Hirsch, Sharon Olds, Charles Wright, and many other writers. (The Great Hall, Cooper Union, 7 E. 7th St. No tickets necessary. Nov. 29 at 7.)

92ND STREET Y
The ninety-four-year-old journalist and humanitarian Ruth Gruber and Harold Ickes, Jr., the deputy White House chief of staff for Bill Clinton, discuss Gruber's remarkable career. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Nov. 29 at 8:15.)

"SUNDAYS AT SUNNY'S"
The poet Brenda Coultas, the essayist Sean Elder, and the novelist Jonathan Tropper gather for an afternoon reading in Red Hook, Brooklyn. (253 Conover St. Dec. 2 at 3. For more information, call BookCourt, at 718-875-3677.)

KGB BAR
Edward Schwarzchild, the author of the novel "Responsible Men," offers selections from his new short-story collection, "The Family Diamond." He'll be joined by Jay Nussbaum, who will read from his novel "A Monk Jumped Over a Wall." (85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary. Dec. 2 at 7.)

WRITERS STUDIO READING SERIES
Philip Schultz celebrates the publication of "Failure," his collection of poems about not making the grade. He'll be joined by Gerald Stern, the poet laureate of New Jersey. (Village Community School, 272 W. 10th St. Tickets at the door. Dec. 3 at 7.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"H_2O ARTS"
The Mary A. Whalen is a hundred-and-seventy-two-foot-long Depression-era oil tanker that spent much of its life delivering fuel up and down the East Coast. After the tanker was taken out of service, in 1993, it was a dock and an office in the Erie Basin Bargeport, in Red Hook, but it recently became the home of a nonprofit group called Portside New York. As part of its mission to engage New Yorkers with the waterfront, Portside has pressed the Mary A. Whalen into service once more, as its main base and as a performance space. (This fall, Portside mounted a production of the Puccini opera "Il Tabarro" on its vast deck.) The ship will soon be moving from Red Hook to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, to a berth at the GMD Shipyard, which has the largest drydock facilities in New York City. On Nov. 27 at 6:30, Portside New York is holding its second "H_2O Arts" event in the shipyard, adjacent to its awe-inspiring graving docks, each a thousand and ninety feet by a hundred and fifty feet. The novelist Gabriel Cohen will read from his murder mystery "The Graving Dock," which is set on the Brooklyn waterfront; a video installation will provide further East River ambience. (For more information, visit www.portsidenewyork.com.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES
The blockbuster sales are behind us, and an air of dignified domesticity has settled over the auction houses—what could be more reassuring than the relaxed luxury of sporting art? **Christie's** auction of sporting and wildlife art (Nov. 28) is spiced up by a large private collection of paintings and sculptures depicting the wild animals of India, Africa, and our own continent. American art is also big this week, represented in a sale (Nov. 29) that is especially strong in Western paintings; a sale of rock and pop memorabilia, which includes a notebook filled with the neatly handwritten lyrics of Hank Williams, follows (Nov. 30). (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.) ♦ More domestic pleasures await at **Sotheby's**, which starts off the week with a sale of American art (Nov. 28), featuring works by Winslow Homer, Norman Rockwell, and the three Wyeths. (One of the top lots, "Gary Cooper as 'The Texan,'" by Rockwell, depicts the star as a movie cowboy getting his face done by a makeup artist.) A sporting sale led by Alfred J. Munnings's "The Start, Newmarket"—and featuring a group of Munnings paintings from the collection of Andrew Lloyd Webber—follows (Nov. 29), as does an auction of wines, many from the cellars of a single collector (Dec. 1), focussing on vintages from Bordeaux, Burgundy, and Alsace. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.) ♦ It's Americana week at **Doyle** as well. On Nov. 28, the house holds both a morning auction of American furniture and decorative arts dating from the Colonial period to the mid-nineteenth century and an afternoon sale of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century art. (175 E. 87th St. 212-427-2730.)

Li'l Mo and the Monicats, in the "Let's Zydeco" series.

JASHAR AWAN

ON THE HORIZON

THE THEATRE
TO BE OR NOT
Dec. 11

Red Bull Theatre revives Christopher Marlowe's drama "Edward the Second," in an adaptation by Garland Wright, at the Peter Jay Sharp Theatre. The opening night, Dec. 15, will be hosted by Mark Rylance, the esteemed former director of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, who has joined the camp of scholars contending that Marlowe may have co-written many of Shakespeare's works. (212-279-4200.)

NIGHT LIFE
HOLIDAY BREAK
Dec. 16

The concert series "Let's Zydeco," which regularly brings Louisiana-based musicians to town, departs from its usual fare for a holiday party featuring the honky-tonk and rockabilly band Li'l Mo and the Monicats. (www.letszydeco.com.)

ART
NET RESULTS
Dec. 18-April 13

The Met makes an overture to the MySpace generation in its upcoming Costume Institute show "blog.mode: addressing fashion." A Web site will invite visitors to unleash their inner critics on the recent acquisitions displayed in the exhibition. (212-535-7710.)

MOVIES
TOUGH COOKIE
Dec. 19-31

The New York-born actress Joan Blondell was Hollywood's exemplary independent woman, and for decades she held her own against such tough customers as James Cagney, Tyrone Power, and Ben Gazzara. A MOMA retrospective of her work ranges from the Busby Berkeley extravaganza "Footlight Parade" to John Cassavetes's modernist melodrama "Opening Night." (212-708-9480.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
IN THE HOUSE
Jan. 7-Feb. 6

Now that Lorin Maazel has several seasons under his belt as the New York Philharmonic's music director, the Metropolitan Opera has invited him to cross the plaza and return to the company to lead several performances of Wagner's "Die Wälkure."

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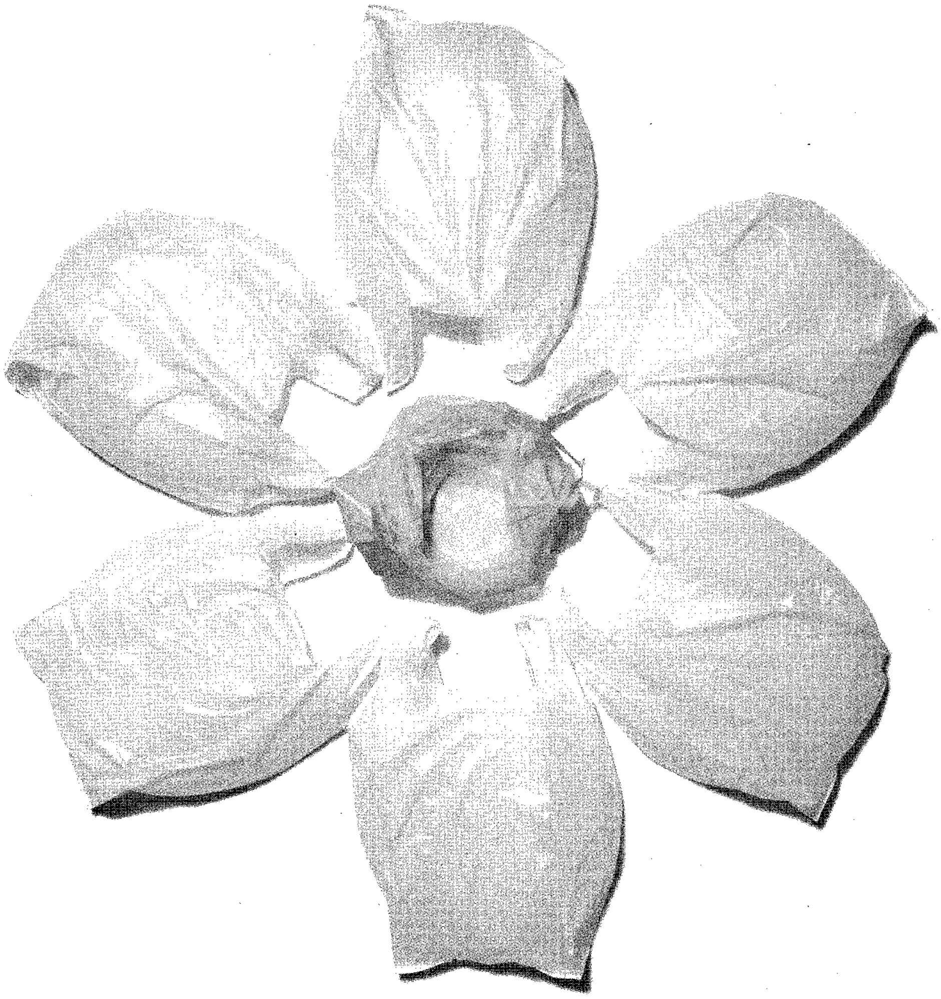

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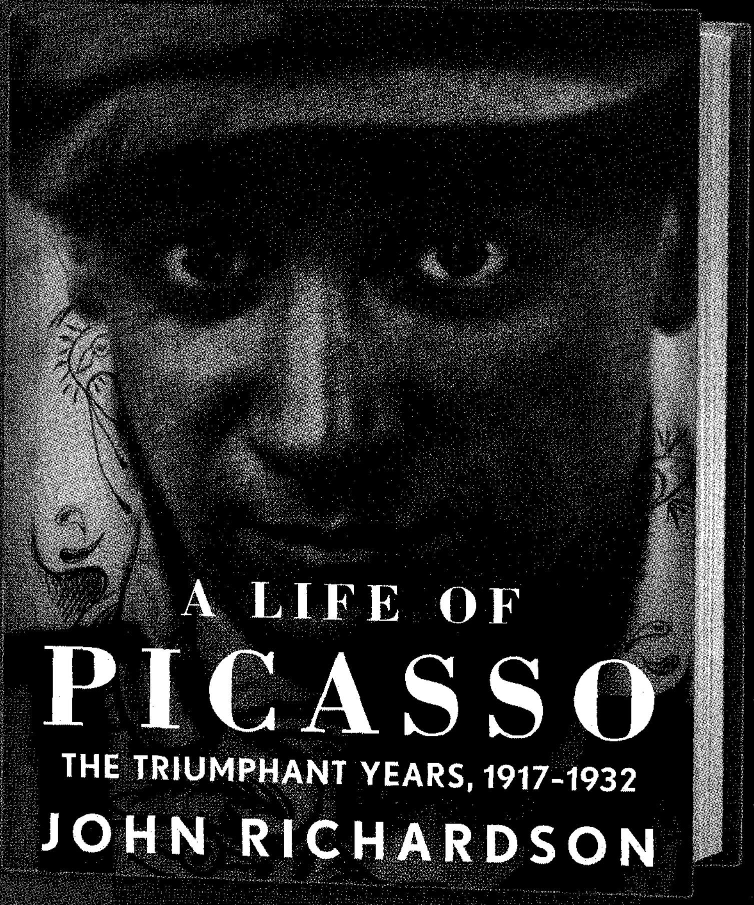
JED PERL, on the front cover of THE N.Y. TIMES BOOK REVIEW



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THE
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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
HUCKABEE?

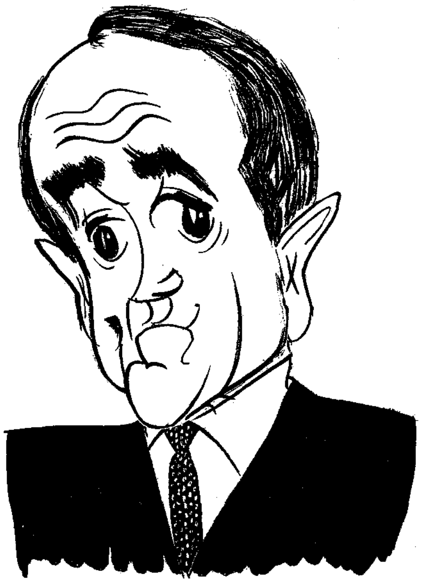
Huckabee. Funny, improbable name; funny, improbable candidate. How funny? Well, have a look at the first Huckabee for President campaign commercial, aired last week in Iowa and now ubiquitous on the Web. In it, the former governor of Arkansas trades straight-faced non sequiturs with Chuck Norris, the B-list action star. (Norris: "Mike Huckabee wants to put the I.R.S. out of business." Huckabee: "When Chuck Norris does a pushup, he isn't lifting himself up, he's pushing the earth down.") It's an unusually entertaining spot—or, rather, meta-spot, the subtext of which is its own absurdity and, by extension, that of the whole genre.

How improbable? Well, up until the tail end of the summer, polls had Huckabee's support for the Republican nomination hovering between zero and three per cent, usually closer to zero. In October, he broke into a trot, in November into a Gallup. In a poll released on Thanksgiving eve by Reuters/Zogby, he is in third place, at eleven per cent, nosing past not only John McCain but also Mitt Romney and narrowing the gap with the fading Fred Thompson to four points. In Iowa, where actual voting will occur on January 3rd, he has surged into what is essentially a tie with Romney for first place.

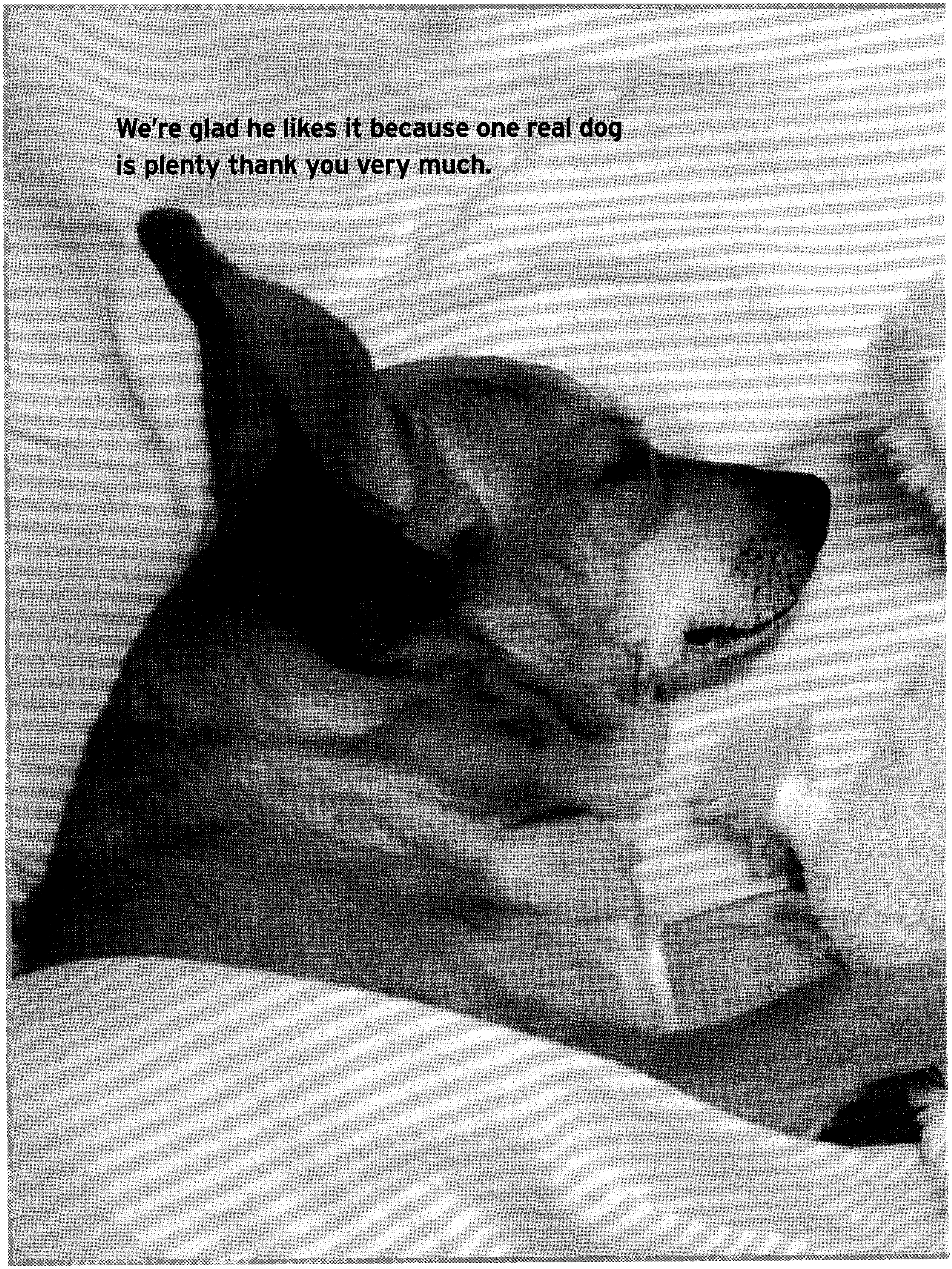
ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

Huckabee, who at fifty-one is the youngest Republican running, spent half of his adult life as a Southern Baptist minister. Most of his support, so far, comes from the Evangelical Christian right. Yet to those who are not in that category his affect is curiously unthreatening. "I'm a conservative, but I'm not mad at anybody," he likes to say. His manner and appearance are reassuringly ordinary. When he smiles or laughs, which is often, his dimpled face looks interestingly like that of Wallace, of Wallace & Gromit.

On a recent day that Huckabee spent in Seattle, where he went to scare up a little cash (he has raised and spent a tiny fraction of his opponents'), his unexpectedness was fully on view. A luncheon speech to a roomful of like-minded supporters—such people do exist even in the land of Microsoft—was remarkable for what it wasn't. The snobbery of cultural élites, the "homosexual agenda," the alleged desire of Democrats to surrender to Islamofascists—these went unmentioned, as did abortion, gay marriage, and the liberal media. Nor did he have anything unpleasant to say about any of the other candidates of either party, unless you count an otherwise respectful reference to Hillary Clinton as "the presumptive Democrat nominee." ("We get along cordially," he said, referring to the Clintons. "They've campaigned against me and raised money for every opponent I ever had, and that's O.K., because I've campaigned against them just as fervently.")



Huckabee speaks calmly, in stories, parables, and extended metaphors. The foreign-policy section of his talk (what there was of it) was a leisurely account of how his children laugh at him when he tells them that his grade-school class used to "duck and cover" in fear of a Soviet nuclear attack. "Somehow, in our naïveté," he said, "we thought that if the world is coming to an end the crosshairs of the first nuclear missile would be aimed at the Brookwood Elementary School, in Hope, Arkansas." The section's conclusion—and the speech's only hint at how the speaker might deal with what he called "a very dangerous world"—was a single sentence: "I want to be the President that helps to make it so that your grandchildren laugh at you when you tell them you used to have to put your toothpaste in a


We're glad he likes it because one real dog
is plenty thank you very much.

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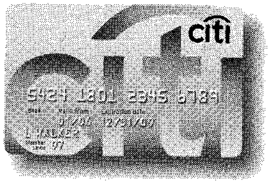
Stuffed poodle **Smitten dog**

With all the howling Max was doing, my husband Eric and I just figured he was lonely. So we used our Citi card to buy a new mirror and tried putting it at floor level. No dice. We tried changing the dog food. Treats. A new dog bed. We even brought in a pet therapist, and still Max seemed so sad. Then it dawned on us – maybe he just needed a companion. Now everyone sleeps better at night. **Whatever your story is, your Citi card can help you write it.**

What's your story?



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plastic bag and take your shoes off to get on an airplane to go somewhere in this country."

Like another governor from Hope who once ran for President, Candidate Huckabee reserves his real passion for matters domestic. On education, he talked not about standardized tests or back-to-basics but about something like their polar opposite. "We have to change and reform the education system so that we're capturing both the left and the right sides of the kid's brain," he said. "There ought to be a new focus not just in math and science—which there needs to be—but also a balanced focus on music and art and right-side-of-the-brain activities. Otherwise, we end up with an education system that's like a data download—a great database but no processor." On health, he skipped the usual denunciations of socialized medicine and noted, as Republicans seldom do, that "we spend so much more per capita than any other country on earth"—far more than second-place Switzerland. "The current system says, 'We won't pay a hundred and fifty dollars for the visit to the podiatrist, we'll wait until there's a thirty-thousand-dollar amputation and we'll cover that.' " Huckabee, who has Type 2 diabetes (but lost a hundred pounds and now runs marathons), knows what he's talking about.

In the question period, the candidate declined several invitations to serve up red meat. Asked about immigration, he hurried through the assurances required by the current perfervid mood among Republicans—seal the border, no amnesty—to add, "People who come to this country would rather come here legally if they had the choice. Nobody wants to break the law because it's fun to break the law. . . . When it takes seven to twelve years to get a permit to come so you can pick lettuce, you'll decide, 'In seven years my family will have starved. I think what I'll do is, I'll just pay somebody a couple of thousand bucks to haul me across the border, and maybe I'll never get caught.' " If there was demagoguery in any of this, it was the demagoguery of policy vagueness and simplistic hope, not the demagoguery of anger and fear. At least Huckabee's stories of people in need don't have the patronizing, self-congratulatory sound of "compassionate conservatism." (Anyhow, Huckabee calls it "conservativism.")

Such signals have begun to excite the suspicions of the economic-royalist wing of the G.O.P. In a conversation after the speech, mention was made of the Club for Growth. Only then did Huckabee have something impolite to say. The Club for Growth is the secular church of supply-side fundamentalism; it promotes tax cuts and nothing but tax cuts, especially for the rich. It has spent months attacking Huckabee as a tax-and-spend liberal, because, in office, he presided over a mixture of tax hikes and tax cuts. "The Club for Greed, I call them," he said. "They hate that. Oh, they hate it. And I enjoy giggin' them about it, because I *think* they're a despicable political hit organization that takes people's money and anonymously attacks candidates, with no integrity to say, 'This person here is attacking this public official.' And when you do it in hiding, from the trees, I just think it's cowardly."

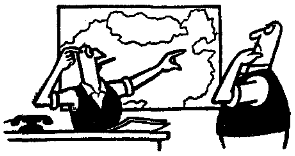
None of this is to say that Huckabee's policy positions are much better than those of his Republican rivals; in some cases, they're worse. He wants to replace the federal tax code with a gigantic, horribly regressive sales tax; he cannot name a single time he has ever disagreed with the National Rifle Association; he wants to amend the Constitution to ban gay marriage and abortion. In practice, however, the sales tax and the amendments would go nowhere, and he couldn't do much about abortion except appoint Scalia-like Justices to the Supreme Court—which his rivals have promised to do, too. God knows what his foreign policy would look like, but no one else does.

To all appearances, Huckabee's gentle rhetoric is a reflection of temperament, not a stylistic tactic. Arkansans caution that he is capable of churlishness. But his history suggests that he prefers consensus to confrontation, that he regards government as a tool for social betterment, and that he has little taste for war, cultural or otherwise. He seems to regard liberalism not as a moral evil, a mental disease, or a character flaw—merely as a political point of view he mostly disagrees with. That may not seem like much, but it makes a nice change. If talk radio hears about it, though, it might be enough to keep him from the top of the ticket.

—Hendrik Hertzberg

WIND ON CAPITOL HILL

WHERE'S MANNY?



One of the lesser mysteries in Washington, D.C., in recent years concerned Manuel Miranda. For a time, he achieved a kind of ubiquity in the capital's political and legal culture, but, shortly after the Democrats took over Congress in 2006, he seemed to vanish. What, some wondered, had become of Manny?

Early in the George W. Bush Presidency, Miranda came to public notice as a fiercely partisan aide to the Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee. He moved to the staff of Bill Frist, who was Senate Majority Leader at the time, and orchestrated a series of noisy attempts—including an all-night Senate session—to win confirmation for Bush's judicial nominations. In November, 2003, after internal documents belonging to Democrats on the committee were leaked, the Senate opened an investigation that revealed that Miranda, through a quirk in the computer system, had been reading his adversaries' e-mails and sharing them with right-leaning news outlets like the Washington *Times.* Senator Orrin Hatch, the Utah Republican, called Miranda's actions "improper, unethical, and simply unacceptable." Miranda resigned, and a criminal investigation of him was initiated.

Miranda then surfaced as the leader of an organization that came to be called the Third Branch Conference—a private lobbying group dedicated to pushing for confirmation of Bush's conservative judicial nominations. Working out of a Capitol Hill town house, Miranda organized conference calls of conservative activists, sent e-mail blasts to reporters, and regularly appeared on television as a booster for Bush's judges. In the summer and fall of 2005, Miranda helped orchestrate support for John G. Roberts, Jr., as Chief Justice, and opposition to the short-lived nomination to the Court of Harriet Miers, which Miranda called "a significant failure." As for Samuel A. Alito, Jr., who replaced Miers as the nominee, Miranda called the choice "a grand slam." After that, there was silence from Miranda. (The criminal investigation went nowhere.)

Then, a couple of weeks ago, Miranda sent a group message to his old e-mail list that closed with his current title: "Director, Office of Legislative Statecraft, State Department, U.S. Embassy, Baghdad." Say what?

"In August of 2005, I got an e-mail saying that the embassy had a need for someone with private-practice and government experience to work with the Iraqi Prime Minister's legal office in developing its process for legislation," Miranda said over the telephone the other day. It took a couple of months for the political appointment to come through, and Miranda needed additional time to receive security clearances and training, but he moved to Baghdad in January of last year and since then has been living in a trailer inside the Green Zone and working in Saddam Hussein's old Republican palace. He is reluctant to say much about his precise duties in Iraq, but it seems that he advises the staff of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki on how to prepare legislation for submission to parliament.

Miranda, who is forty-eight years old, was in Washington last week for a brief visit, accompanying about a dozen Iraqi lawyers who were making the rounds of Capitol Hill to urge continued support for their fledgling democracy. (Chief Justice Roberts welcomed the group for a short meeting.) The last few years have been rough ones for the legal profession in Iraq. "Almost a hundred lawyers have been killed, and judges have been kidnapped and tortured," Miranda said. "I had to overcome all the stereotypes that have built up about the Middle East for years, but the Iraqis have overwhelmed me with their courage."

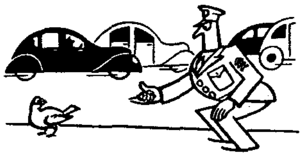
As in the judicial-nomination fights, Miranda remains a true believer. Supporters of the American invasion have been shy in recent months about suggesting that the political changes in Iraq might lead to a broader liberalization in the Middle East, but Miranda is still thinking that way.

"The law has not been updated here in forty years," he said. "The legal culture and the profession had been left to suffocate in the fascist regime. But at the rate we're going Iraq will jump ahead of its neighbors and show what can be done."

Some people might wonder what a non-Arabic-speaking political activist has to offer the Iraqi government, but not Miranda. "I had experience on the Hill and in constitutional issues, and it seemed perfect for me," he said. In any event, Miranda says he rarely discusses politics with his colleagues at the embassy. Yet he still knows a talking point when he sees one. "Their parliament has accomplished more than our Congress has in the past year, that's for sure," he said.

—*Jeffrey Toobin*

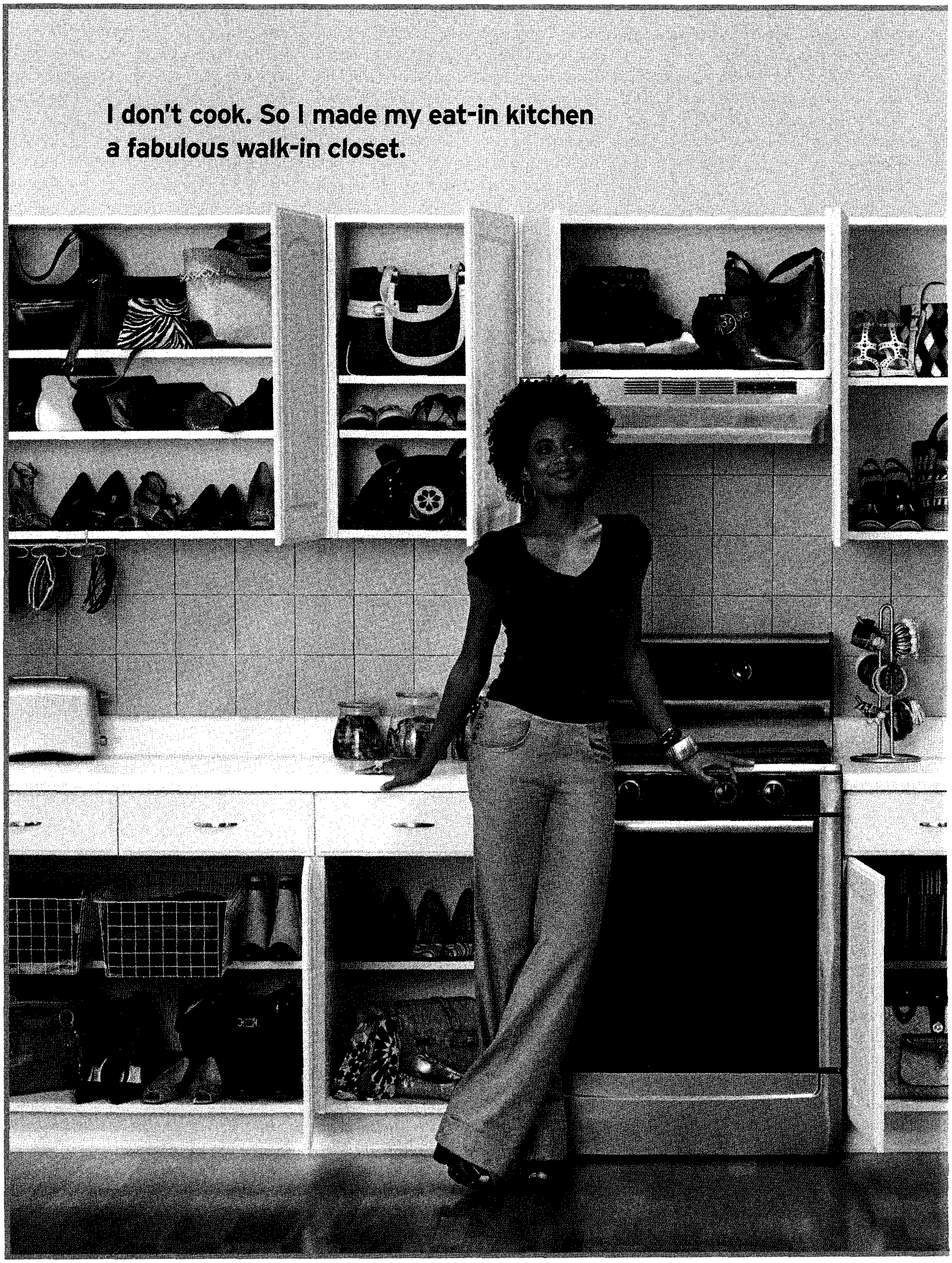
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
THE PIGEON POLICE



Pity the New York City pigeon. He finds a place where natural predators are few, and where bread crumbs—note that stooped woman clutching a plastic bag—are bountiful, and yet his life expectancy is just three to four years, compared with fifteen for his cousins in captivity. So life is short: he stuffs himself before he mistakes an office window for open sky. Or maybe he has the misfortune of needing to relieve himself—perhaps more than once—near a subway stop in the district of the Honorable Simcha Felder, councilman from Brooklyn. Felder steps in the guano—he calls it a "puddle" of excrement—and becomes enraged, commissioning a report from his staff: "Curbing the Pigeon Conundrum." Soon after, Christine Quinn, the City Council Speaker, refers to pigeons as "flying rats." Now there's talk of implementing the report's Recommendation No. 5: "Create Pigeon Czar." The czar's responsibilities would include reducing the food supply, promoting birth control (via oral contraceptives disguised as crumbs), and supervising a pilot program called "dovecoting," which involves confiscating pigeon eggs and replacing them with decoys.

"People ask me, 'You have nothing else to do with your time?' " Councilman Felder said recently, sitting in his office on Broadway, where he had decorated one of the walls with a blown-up photograph of some guano-encrusted pipes at the Lorimer Street stop on the J/M trains, which is evidently a pigeon campground. "I think it's pretty important for people in this city, who work hard and get up early, not to have to succumb to the droppings." (From the report: "When dried droppings get wet, this compound takes on an electric charge and can rust steel.") A well-fed pigeon will produce twenty-five pounds of waste in a year, and there may be more than a million pigeons in New York. Felder favors an outright ban on feeding them in public, and plans to introduce a bill to this effect before Christmas. "If somebody loves a pigeon and wants to have one in their living room, and have it run around and donate its droppings, that's fine," he said. "Do whatever you want." He is also calling for all the city's garbage cans to be capped, so that a little more ingenuity would be required of hungry pigeons. "If they want to eat, they have to get inside the hole," he said. "They can't just pick at the side. Now it's, like, Mr. Pigeon says to Mrs. Pigeon, 'Do you want to go out to dinner tonight? We don't have to go to Radio City Music Hall. We can go down to Broadway and Forty-fourth. The can there is easy.' "

And what of the new czar? Felder recommended that his or her authority derive from the Department of Sanitation, one of a half-dozen agencies with overlapping pigeon jurisdiction, but said that he had come to regret the use of the term "czar." (The English town of Walsall employs a "pigeon warden.") "It sounds exciting," he said. "But this is not


I don't cook. So I made my eat-in kitchen
a fabulous walk-in closet.

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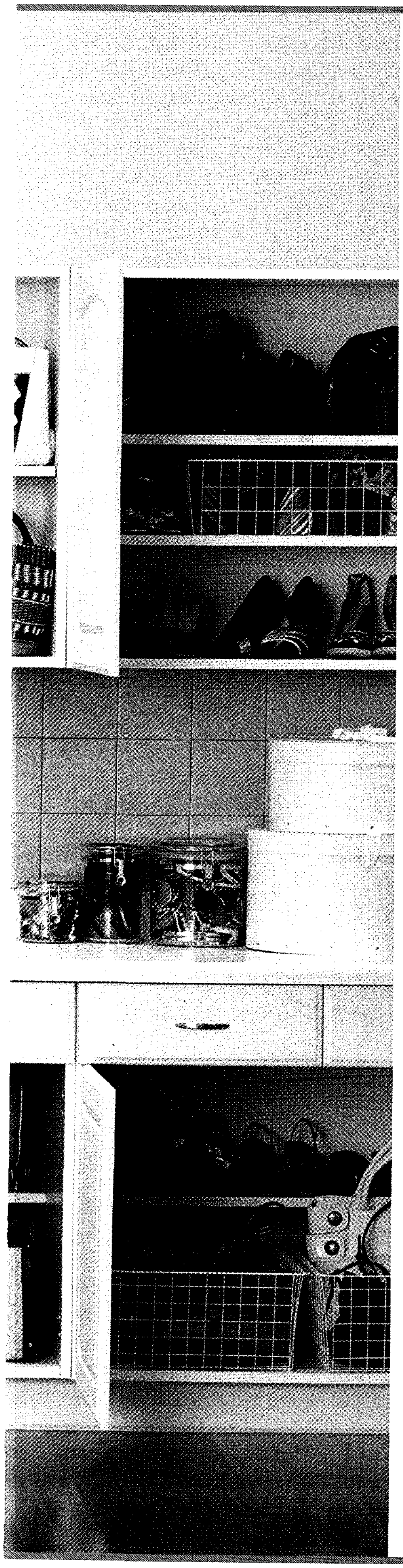

Shelves & boxes **Thinking outside the box**

My name is Grace and I live in a small apartment in a big city. And since I enjoy a day of shopping far more than, say, cooking, I decided to do a bit of home remodeling. So with my Citi card in hand, I set out to get some closet organizers. I bought a shoe rack for the oven, sweater boxes for the lower cupboards and some 12-inch baskets for handbags up above. I saved room for plates, glasses and silverware. And one large drawer stuffed with take-out menus. **Whatever your story is, your Citi card can help you write it.**

What's your story?

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a military operation. We're not having tanks and fighter jets come in to do this battle with the pigeons. The point is, right now there are city enforcement agents that are out on the streets giving homeowners hundred-dollar tickets for gum wrappers in front of their homes." He would prefer to see those tickets handed out to bird feeders, at a steeper cost: a thousand bucks.

"I'm not a pigeon expert," Felder said at one point. "I'm an expert on knowing what pigeons do to people." His opposition, including a group called Pigeon People, has already begun mobilizing. A pro-pigeon rally is scheduled to take place this week at City Hall, and after that there will likely be a public hearing on Felder's proposed legislation. "People who hate pigeons are not going to come in flocks," he conceded. "But those people who really think that they should be able to feed pigeons anytime? They will come." He leaned back and nodded. "They will come."

The anticipation seemed to be making him paranoid. "Yesterday, I was having lunch in City Hall Park with a colleague, and this squirrel comes over, literally up to my feet, and he stands up," Felder said. "I'm eating a bar of chocolate. I said, 'What, are you kidding? You're with them?' It ran away, but five minutes later dozens of pigeons, like something out of some spook movie, show up, and they're all over the place. I said, 'Get a camera!' " Not long afterward, a constituent telephoned Felder's office to lodge a complaint. "I felt bad," Felder recalled. "He said, 'I heard you're getting rid of birds in the city.' I said, 'If I was capable of doing that, I wouldn't be a councilman.' "

—*Ben McGrath*

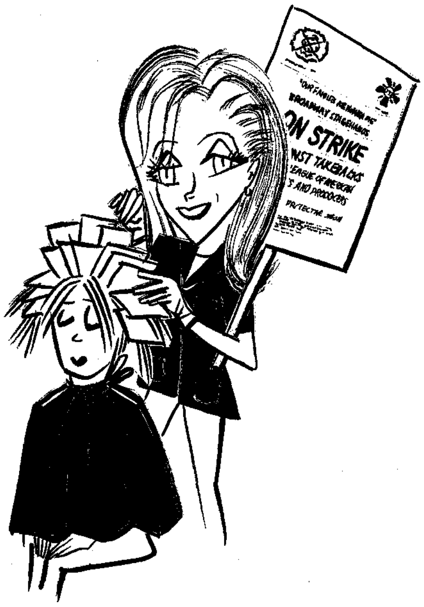
DEPT. OF MOONLIGHTING
STRIKE TWO

The twin strikes that shut down the entertainment industry this month—walkouts by Broadway stagehands and by movie and television writers—have had, for the most part, separate spheres of fallout. Around the theatre district, chorus girls, trumpet players, tourists with dreams of seeing "Mamma Mia!," and bartenders have all been affected; elsewhere, the writers' strike has disrupted the routines of literary agents, craft-services professionals, stuntmen, and couch potatoes. At least one person has felt the brunt of both strikes: Cara Hannah, who is employed as a wig stylist at "The Phantom of the Opera" and at "Saturday Night Live."

Hannah has been working at "Phantom" for four months. She is responsible for the application and upkeep of more than a dozen wigs, she said recently, including those of Piangi, Meg, Buquet, and "a couple of slave girls." She also does some part-time work at "Saturday Night Live," fulfilling what she calls "a lifelong dream." On November 2nd, she worked an eight-hour call, fitting mod wigs for a James Bond parody starring that week's host, Brian Williams. Afterward, the two of them shared an elevator ride; things were good. That day, the Writers Guild moved to strike. Hannah was bummed, but not as much as she was the next weekend, when Local 1, the stagehands' union, announced its walkout and "Phantom" was shut down as well. "It was like, strike one, strike two," she said. "I'll be damned if I have strike three."

In need of a paycheck, Hannah looked for temporary employment at a theatrical-wig shop, with no luck. She filled out applications at a few salons, and when those didn't pan out she interviewed for an "unnameable" position at Macy's. (It had something to do with Santa Claus.) "I just got desperate," she said, "and Daniel, my fiancé, saw that." Daniel Sullivan, an actor, sent out an e-mail to his friends in the theatre community, announcing the opening of Chez Sullivan Salon, "a charming hair paradise" situated in the bathroom of their apartment, in midtown, where they live with their two kids. "Broadway's loss is your gain!" he wrote. "And NBC's loss is your additional gain!" The salon, he promised, would offer "cheap-o" rates: ten dollars for men's haircuts, twenty-five for women's, two bucks per foil for spot highlights, and ninety for a full head of highlights.

The response was overwhelming: within two days, Hannah had scheduled more than twenty appointments, which she squeezed in between stints on the "Phantom" picket line. (Local 798, which represents theatrical-makeup artists and hair stylists, is a sister union of Local 1.) "I think my prices are attractive," she said the other day, in her apartment. "I take into consideration that, you know, I'm making people sit next to my john." Hannah, wearing a black smock and a rubber glove, was applying lightener to the tin-foil-partitioned head of her 11 A.M. client, Meryl Devulder, her fiancé's former cast mate in a children's production of "Rapunzel." Devulder had brought in a magazine clipping of Téa Leoni. (Despite Hannah's credentials, no one has yet requested the Mme. Giry or the Andy Samberg.) Today's agenda: blond highlights, a little off the back, and a blowout.

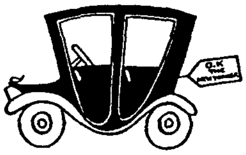


Hannah explained that she has had to make do with a limited arsenal of supplies. "I'm not stocked like a full salon, so when strangers call me I don't know what their color is or anything," she said. And you won't find any back issues of *Marie Claire* in her living room. Still, Chez Sullivan Salon has a welcoming ambience (notwithstanding a few complaints from Hannah's fourteen-year-old son about stray hairs in the bathroom) and a Manhattan-inflected décor. (A blurred photograph of the Empire State Building adorns the shower curtain.) Gabbing, another crucial element of salon culture, is also evident, even if the talk tends more toward labor relations than toward horoscopes. Devulder, who works as a restaurant hostess, said that she has also been feeling repercussions of the Broadway strike. "People call and say, 'I wish I could keep my reservation, but we're not going to see a show anymore.' "

Hannah, blow-dryer in hand, commiserated: "If you got me on Tuesday, I wasn't so positive. I have never been so down as when I was walking that picket line. Everyone was like, 'What's wrong with you?' And I was like, 'I don't want to work out in the real world. I want my job back! I would do anything right now to be rolling that Piangi wig.' " With that, she led Devulder from the bathroom and rinsed her hair in the kitchen sink.

—*Michael Schulman*

POSTCARD FROM PADUA
PIO'S RIDE



Thousands of people made the pilgrimage to the northern Italian university town of Padua several weekends ago for the Auto e Moto d'Epoca, one of Europe's premier car shows. Everything from sparkplugs to Ferraris was on exhibit at the Fiera di Padova, a kind of industrial fairground a short walk from the train station. In one hall, Coys of Kensington, auctioneers of vintage motorcars, had assembled a fleet of pristine Jaguars, Porsches, Lamborghinis, Maseratis, Lancias, MGs, and Austin Healeys, a green Vespa with sidecar, a collectible Fiat 500 or two—the ever popular Cinquecento, which Italians call the Topolino, or Little Mouse—and an irresistible sideshow: a 1959 Mercedes-Benz 190 D that had belonged to Padre Pio (1887-1968), a Capuchin monk who for fifty years bore the stigmata and in 2002 was canonized St. Pio of Pietrelcina.

Of course, Padre Pio had taken a vow of poverty, so he didn't actually own anything, much less a luxury automobile. The story is that the Mercedes was a gift from a wealthy family in gratitude for a miracle. Padre Pio is credited with countless miracles, some of them vehicular in nature: there is the story of a driver who survived a near-fatal accident, and also of a motorcyclist who sped ten miles on an empty tank to keep a lunch date at the monastery. Padre Pio's advice to people who came to him for help was "Pray, hope, and don't worry." For this reason, he has become known as the patron saint of stress relief.

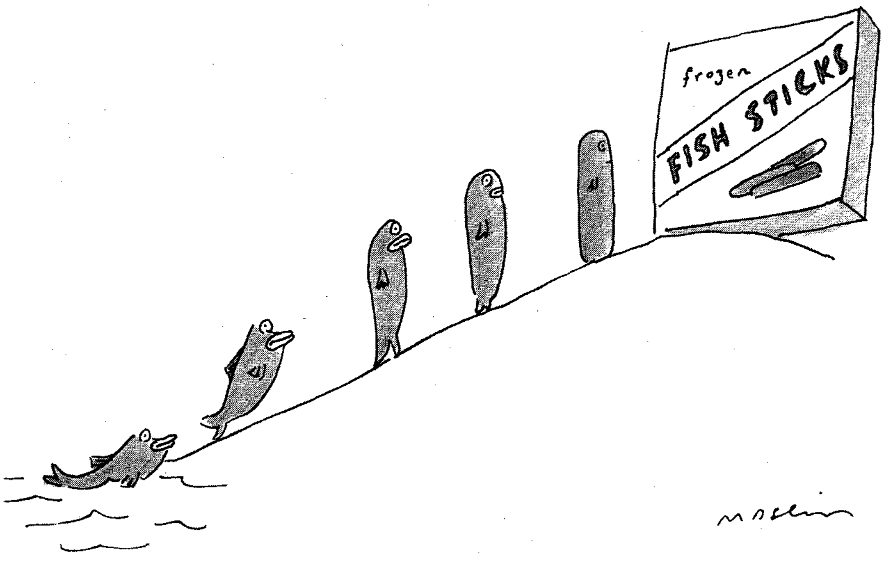
Lot 234, the Ex Padre Pio, as the Mercedes was called, came up for auction at midday. Bidding had just wound down on a 1966 Ferrari 275 GTS Spyder whose estimated value was more than three hundred and sixty thousand euros, but there was no published estimate for the Ex Padre Pio. It was a car that, apart from its priceless (if undocumented) pedigree, had a lot of character: cream and brown, like the Capuchin habit, somehow bulbous, with a black flap like a toupee that folded back to reveal a moonroof, and grillework that resembled a mustache. It had Bari license plates. The owner, Giuseppe Favia, was at the show. A dealer in Bari, he had bought the car from one Francesco Tripoli, who had acquired it from Domenico Cristiani, who, while working near the monastery, had received it as a gift from Padre Pio, who apparently never had much use for it. The Ex Padre Pio Mercedes-Benz went one better than the car driven only to church on Sunday by the apocryphal little old lady: it sat at the monastery most of the time. Thanks to the southern-Italian climate, there was no rust. The interior was immaculate, and the odometer registered only 50,528 miles—a cream puff.

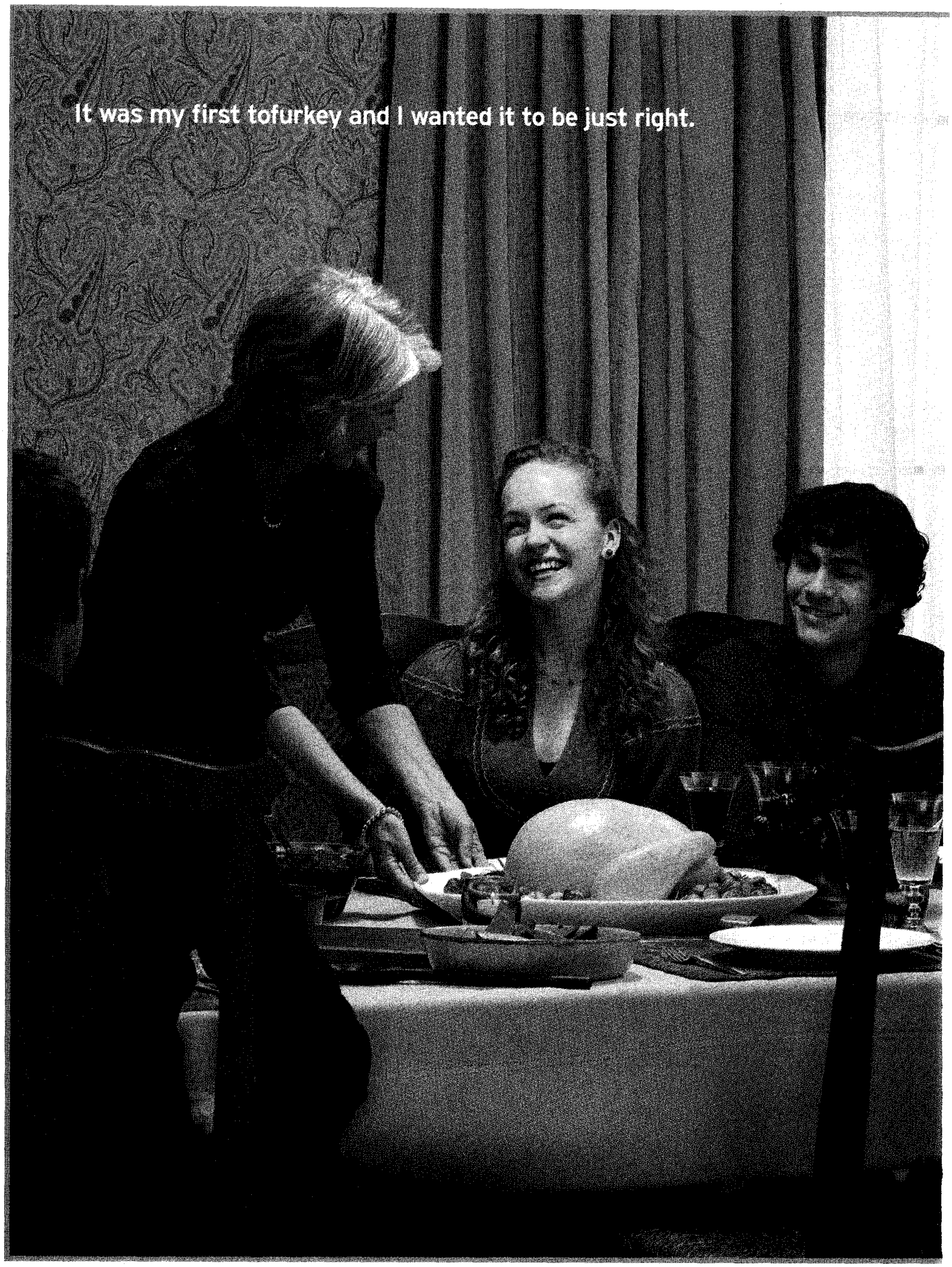
Bidding began at a hundred and fifty thousand euros, with the auctioneer under pressure to push the price up. (It had been widely reported that a Volkswagen Golf said to have been owned by the Pope had sold on eBay for a hundred and eighty-nine thousand euros.) By the end, three bidders were contending, one of them on the phone from Belgium. The final bid of two hundred and forty thousand euros seemed to come from a bidder in the hall. When it was all over, Signor Favia tried to find the bidder, but he was not in the crowd.

Coys not only protected the anonymity of the buyer but maintained, despite the throng of witnesses, that the car had not been sold. David Barzilay, of Coys, invoked a technicality: "The auctioneer never said 'Sold.' " When pressed, he added that the reserve of three hundred thousand euros had not been met. Apparently, it is not unusual for negotiations to continue after an auction; the auctioneers had their commission to consider, and they might not have heard the last of the Belgian. This left Signor Favia in a state of limbo.

Still, the Italian newspapers ran with it. "The latest miracle of Padre Pio," *Il Gazzettino* proclaimed, was to have elevated the price of a car worth about twenty thousand euros to more than ten times that amount. The next day, *La Repubblica* noted that, in all the excitement over the Mercedes and over new speculations about the stigmata, it had been overlooked that Padre Pio, in addition to levitation, bilocation, and the odor of sanctity, possessed another gift: that of speeding the mail. Apparently, a letter consigned by Padre Pio to an ordinary mailbox reached its recipient less than an hour later, smelling of violets and strawberry.

—*Mary Norris*




It was my first tofurkey and I wanted it to be just right.

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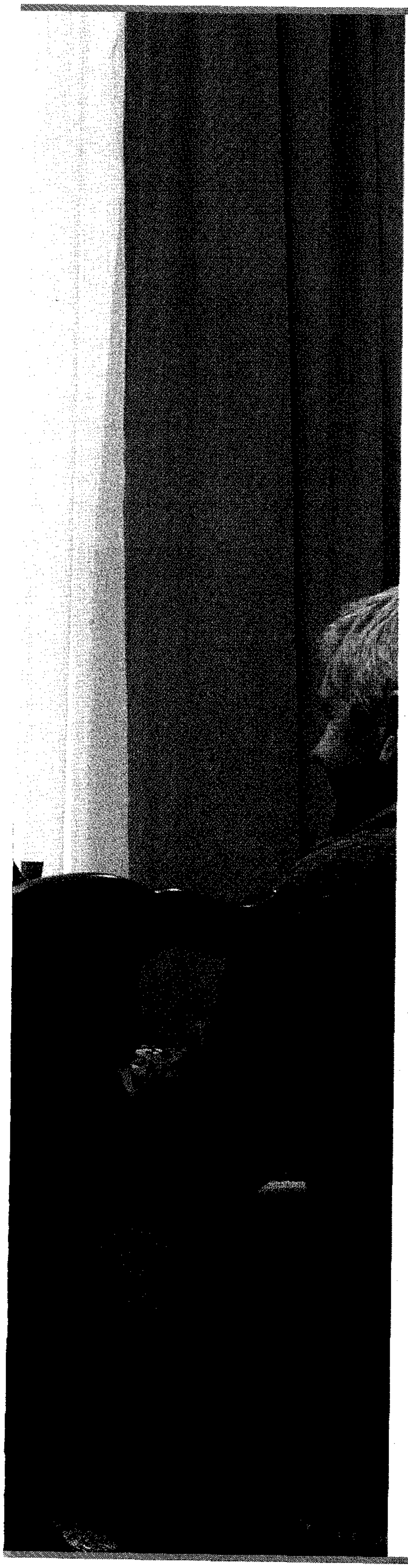

All the trimmings All in the family

Well, my son Jack went and married a vegetarian. So I grabbed my Citi card and went to the store. I picked up the old favorites like cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, green beans and turnips. As well as 15 pounds of "turkey" tofu. The dinner was a hit. Alice knows she's already more like a daughter than an in-law. And all around, our family was feeling a lot of love. My husband Steve especially loved that I made a small turkey for him to eat later. **Whatever your story is, your Citi card can help you write it.**

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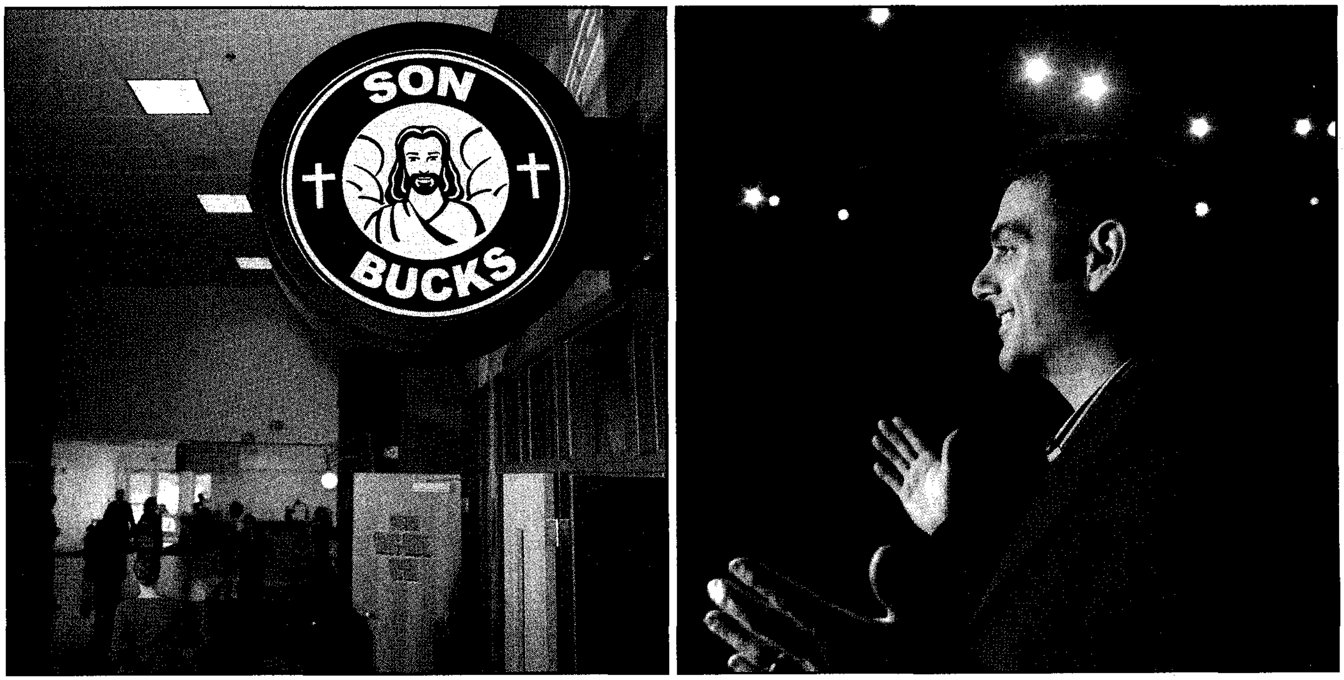
ANNALS OF RELIGION

COME ONE, COME ALL

Building a megachurch in New England.

BY FRANCES FITZGERALD

At the turnoff to the New Milford town green, Route 7, the two-lane road that winds through the narrow, forested valley of the Housatonic River, linking rural northwestern Connecticut with Danbury and the suburbanized south, abruptly opens out into four lanes. A few miles farther south, the road is still under construction, but already auto dealerships and mini-malls have sprung up on both sides, leaving only an empty farm stand and a quilting shop to remind passersby that New Milford was once a farming community. Faith Church, completed two years ago, is hard to see for the roadwork, and hard to identify, because, apart from the three stucco crosses on its façade, the building looks much like a big-box store. The church parking lot is enormous, and at 10:45 A.M. on a Sunday hundreds of people stream from their cars to the wide glass doors of the church for the second service of the morning.



The coffee shop at Faith Church, in New Milford, led by Pastor Frank Santora (right). Photographs by Brian Finke.

In New Milford, a town of thirty thousand, Faith Church is a matter of curiosity. It looks nothing like the Congregational and Episcopal churches on the historic green, or even the modern Catholic and Baptist churches in town. People call it "the faith place," and they wonder who goes there and where they come from.

Faith Church, however, would look familiar to people in other parts of the country. The doors open onto a spacious and well-lit reception area with wall-to-wall carpeting, plasma TV screens, and sofas, where people can watch the service going on in the sanctuary. The first time I attended services there, an ebullient woman in bluejeans introduced herself as Susan and invited me over to the booth to pick up some information about the church. While I leafed through four-color brochures advertising Bible-study classes, a day-care center, a pre-K-12 school, and a variety of ministries, she asked if I wanted to fill out a card with my contact information and gave me a gift for newcomers—a beribboned package containing a coupon for the church's coffee shop, more brochures, and a CD of a sermon by the senior pastor, Frank Santora, on how to build self-esteem by "seeing yourself as God sees you." Did I want information about small groups? There were groups for single women, basketball players, scrapbook-makers, museumgoers, and a group led by Susan herself for people learning to trade on eBay.

I passed a bookstore and found myself in a hallway decorated with comic-book-style murals of a street scene in an old-fashioned town. At a registration desk, parents were lining up at a computerized check-in system to get name tags for their kids before sending them in to the schoolrooms for children's church, which offers Bible lessons, worship, playtime, and snacks. At the "Sonbucks" coffee shop down the hall, volunteers were working an espresso machine. When a band began to play, people drifted into the sanctuary, some carrying their Styrofoam cups with them.

The sanctuary at Faith Church, as in many megachurches, looks like a modern concert hall, with more than a thousand comfortable seats arrayed in front of a deep stage. The services often begin with soft rock music, played by an eight-piece band, then singers appear, to lead the congregation in praise songs: "I worship you" and "Wonderful God, you are worthy." The worship pastor, Charles Reid, an African-American, directs this part of the service from a keyboard, interpolating the music with prayers. All the other full-time pastors on the staff are white, but the congregation is about forty per cent white and thirty per cent African-American, with the rest predominantly Latino and Asian. The doctrinal statement on the church Web site makes it clear that the church is Pentecostal, but Faith Church is nondenominational, and, while in most Pentecostal churches the worship is spontaneous and ecstatic, with people raising their arms in rapture and sometimes speaking in tongues, here the worship is decorous. The services, which usually include live skits or videos that introduce the text of the sermon, are well produced—almost professionally so—by a woman on the church staff. The lyrics of the songs and the Biblical verses the pastors cite appear simultaneously on a large video screen above the stage, and television cameras record the services for broadcast on a dozen local public-access stations.

On the stage, Frank Santora was preaching the second sermon of a series called "God's Apprentice," before a backdrop of the Manhattan skyline. With an untucked, open-necked shirt, he looked like any man from the audience. He sat at a small table at the front of the stage, wearing a head mike, and spoke in a conversational manner. His sermon was on how to influence people, and in explaining how not to do it he gave a funny imitation, in his high tenor voice, of a guy on a soapbox telling everyone they were going to Hell. When he told Bible stories, he used everyday language and created lively, sometimes comic dramas. In Santora's version of the story of Mary and Martha, Jesus shows up at their house for lunch unannounced with twelve hungry fishermen. The floors aren't washed, the living room isn't vacuumed, and the dishes are still in the sink. Martha, "in panic mode," busies herself cleaning, cooking, and setting the table. She's so busy she doesn't have time for Jesus. Mary, meanwhile, "has got this thing figured out." Their house, she thinks, is what it is, and Jesus didn't come to be impressed. So she just clears a space on the floor and sits at his feet to listen. Toward the end of the sermon, Santora, now raising his voice, walked about the stage, joked with the musicians, and used comic props. The audience applauded, then grew quiet as he concluded with a lesson about how to grow in faith and to influence others as Christians.

When Santora took over the church, in 1997, its congregation numbered less than three hundred. At the time, it was called Bright Clouds Christian Church, and met in a church it had built in Danbury. Within a few years of his arrival, it was holding three services on weekends, and at the eleven-o'clock Sunday service the congregation overflowed its six-hundred-seat sanctuary. Unable to find land for a bigger building in Danbury, the church bought forty acres ten miles north of town, in New Milford. Since the completion of the new building, in June, 2005, the congregation has been growing at an average of twenty-five per cent a year, with some people coming from as far away as the Bronx. Faith currently draws fifteen hundred people to its weekend services, and at its current rate of growth it will draw two thousand, and attain the status of a megachurch, within the next two years.

Megachurches are rare in New England—there are fewer than a dozen in the region—but there are more than twelve hundred and fifty of them across the country. Since 1980, their numbers have been growing almost exponentially. According to surveys conducted by Scott Thumma, a sociologist at the Hartford Institute for Religion Research, in conjunction with other researchers, the number of megachurches doubled between 2000 and 2005, and their average size increased by fifty-seven per cent. The majority are in the Sun Belt, and around sprawling cities such as Atlanta, Dallas, and Los Angeles. They are almost without exception theologically conservative: evangelical in the broad sense of the term. Most of their congregations are in the two-to-three-thousand range, but the largest of them, Lakewood, headed by Joel Osteen, who broadcasts his services live on TV, numbers more than forty thousand. Lakewood is in Houston—it occupies a stadium that once belonged to the Houston Rockets—but the majority are in suburbs or exurbs. Typically, their

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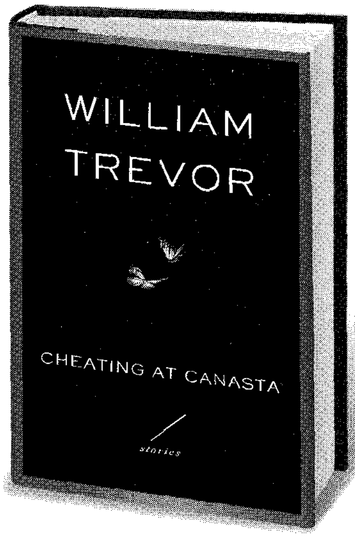

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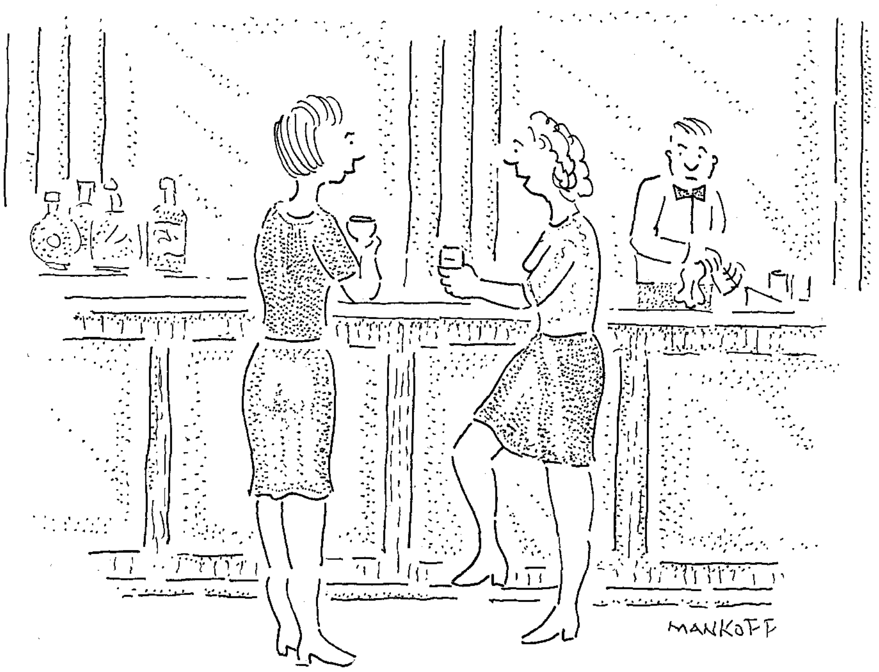


"I hate to admit it, but a man with a big carbon footprint makes me hot."

• •

pastors built in high-growth areas, near highways, when the land was relatively cheap. The second- and fourth-largest churches—Willow Creek, in South Barrington, Illinois, and Saddleback, in Orange County, California—were planted in this fashion more than a quarter of a century ago. Their pastors, Bill Hybels, at Willow Creek, and Rick Warren, at Saddleback, both now in their fifties, have created a pattern for many of the newer churches in everything from worship styles to programming. They do not preach politics, but then, contrary to the impression many non-evangelicals have, only a few megachurch pastors are active in the religious-right movement.

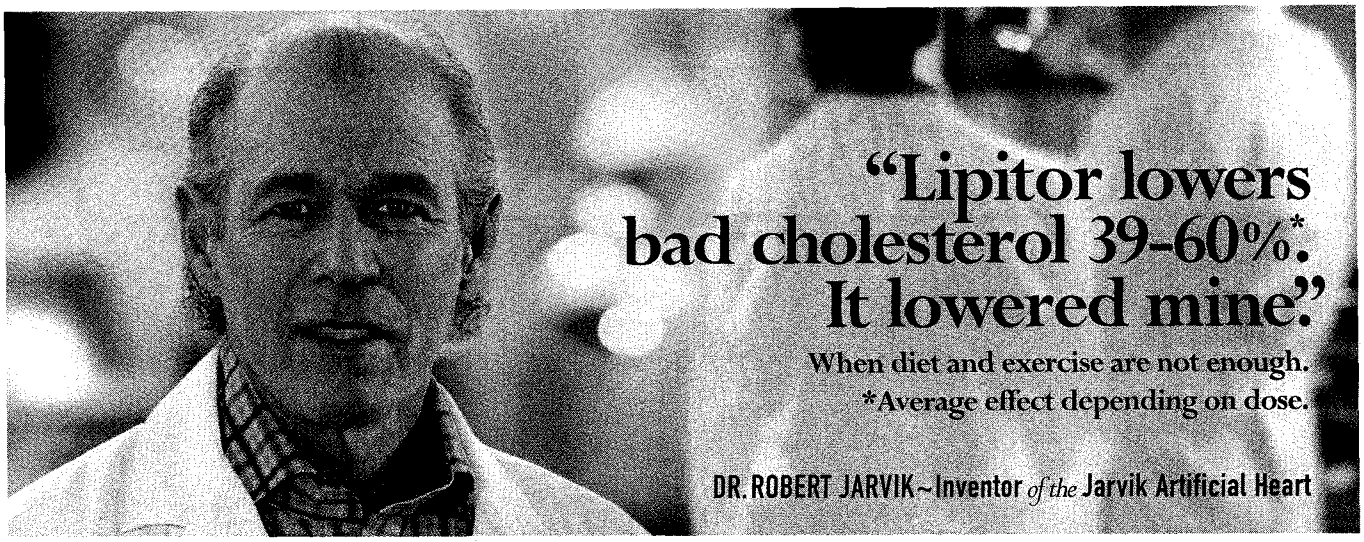
Robert Putnam, a professor of public policy at Harvard, who has written extensively on the breakdown of social networks, and Andy Stern, the president of the Service Employees International Union, have both described the megachurch as one of the most successful community-building institutions of modern times. Almost all megachurches have cafés or food courts, bookstores, sports facilities, child care, youth programs, and small groups, which can include anything from Bible-study classes to affinity groups for motorcyclists. Most of the larger churches have an array of counselling programs and support groups for those suffering from divorce, depression, addiction, or the death of a loved one. Many, including Faith Church, offer classes in how to manage family finances, and many have funds to help church members through financial crises. All have opportunities for community service, and many have drama groups, arts classes, and high-tech recording equipment. In other words, megachurches offer just about everything the newly arrived suburbanite can't find at Wal-Mart or Home Depot.

But they are also a new species of church. Their pastors, instead of expecting people to accept their practices, have tailored their churches to meet the needs and desires of those they hope to serve. As a result, many have come to define the role of the church in a far more expansive way than traditional churches do.

Megachurches have developed as they have in part because most of their pastors aim to attract people from a variety of religious backgrounds. In the evangelical strongholds of the South, many megachurches belong to the Southern Baptist Convention, the Assemblies of God, and other large evangelical denominations, but nationally a third of all megachurches are, like Faith Church, nondenominational, and many others play down their denominational ties. Saddleback, for example, is a Southern Baptist church, but Rick Warren doesn't advertise this to newcomers, and he has brought in not only congregants from different evangelical denominations but also former Catholics and former mainline Protestants. Hybels's congregation at Willow Creek was at one time forty per cent former Catholics.

New England, however, has posed a particular challenge to megachurch builders, not only because it has a relatively small population but because it has relatively few evangelicals. It is the most intensely Catholic part of the country. Catholics of Irish, Italian, and French-Canadian descent have been the religious majority for more than a century, and today, with the addition of Latino Catholics, they make up seventy per cent of those who claim a religious identity. In New Milford and the other small towns of Litchfield County, to the north, Protestant churches dominate the town greens, but Catholics outnumber mainline Protestants by two or three to one. In Fairfield County, to the south, from which Faith Church draws many of its attendees, practicing Catholics make up half the population. They outnumber mainline Protestants by more than five to one, and evangelicals by twelve to one, though this figure does not include African-American congregations, many of which are evangelical. The number of evangelicals in the area appears to be growing, owing partly to the pharmaceutical and financial-services industries, among others, which have attracted people from around the country to cities like Danbury. There has also been a rise in the number of Latino immigrants, some of whom are Pentecostals. But the potential congregation for Faith Church largely consists of the thirty to forty per cent of the people in the area who are not affiliated with any church, most of whom consider themselves to be Christians.

Frank Santora's office at the back of Faith Church looks like the quarters of a sports coach. A small, L-shaped room in a corridor of offices guarded by a receptionist, it has a framed basketball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LIPITOR is not for everyone. It is not for those with liver problems. And it is not for women who are nursing, pregnant or may become pregnant. If you take LIPITOR, tell your doctor if you feel any new muscle pain or weakness. This could be a sign of rare but serious muscle side effects. Tell your doctor about all medications you take. This may help avoid serious drug interactions. Your doctor should do blood tests to check your liver function before and during treatment and may adjust your dose. The most common side effects are gas, constipation, stomach pain and heartburn. They tend to be mild and often go away.

Please see additional important information on next page.

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- Adults and children over 10

Who should NOT take LIPITOR:

- Women who are pregnant, may be pregnant, or may become pregnant. LIPITOR may harm your unborn baby. If you become pregnant, stop LIPITOR and call your doctor right away.
- Women who are breast-feeding. LIPITOR can pass into your breast milk and may harm your baby.
- People with liver problems
- People allergic to anything in LIPITOR

BEFORE YOU START LIPITOR

Tell your doctor:

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- If you drink more than 2 alcoholic drinks a day
- If you have diabetes or kidney problems
- If you have a thyroid problem

ABOUT LIPITOR

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- diabetes with risk factor such as eye problems, kidney problems, smoking, or high blood pressure

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POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF LIPITOR

Serious side effects in a small number of people:

- **Muscle problems** that can lead to kidney problems, including kidney failure. Your chance for muscle problems is higher if you take certain other medicines with LIPITOR.
- **Liver problems**. Your doctor may do blood tests to check your liver before you start LIPITOR and while you are taking it.

Symptoms of muscle or liver problems include:

- Unexplained muscle weakness or pain, especially if you have a fever or feel very tired
- Nausea, vomiting, or stomach pain
- Brown or dark-colored urine
- Feeling more tired than usual
- Your skin and the whites of your eyes turn yellow

If you have these symptoms, call your doctor right away.

The most common side effects of LIPITOR are:

- Headache
- Diarrhea, gas
- Rash
- Constipation
- Upset stomach and stomach pain
- Muscle and joint pain

Side effects are usually mild and may go away by themselves. Fewer than 3 people out of 100 stopped taking LIPITOR because of side effects.

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Do:

- Take LIPITOR as prescribed by your doctor.
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LPIF Rev 2, Dec 2005

jersey and pair of boxing shorts, and autographed photographs of Dallas Cowboys on one wall, a basketball signed by Knicks players on the top of a bookshelf, and another on a small round table where Santora sits with guests. When I went to see him, Santora, a tall man with short-cropped hair, wore an old leather jacket that was much too big for him. He had lost a considerable amount of weight since I had seen him preach some months earlier, and he looked much younger than he had on the stage. He was thirty-five years old and a sports fan, but not a player.

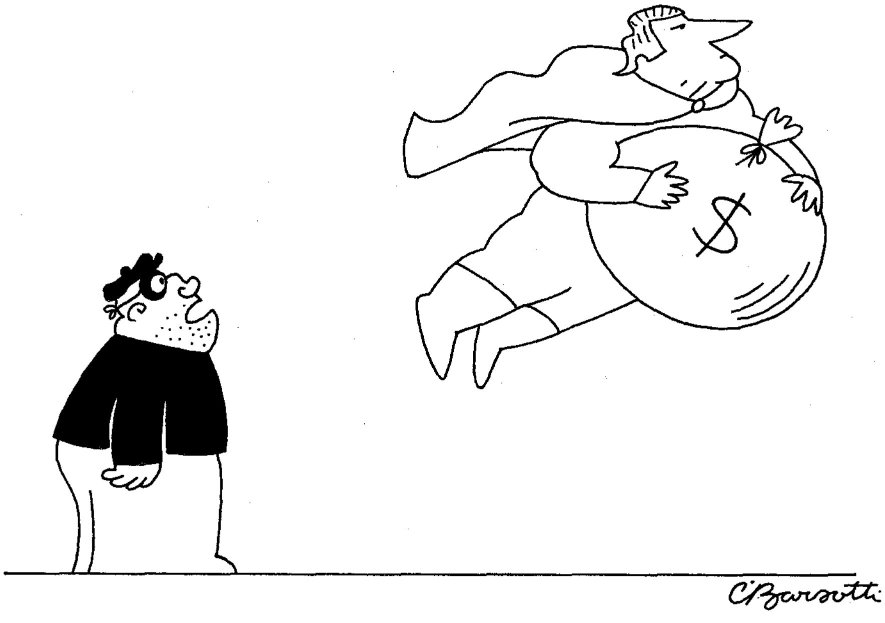
Santora said that when a visitor to his church remarked on his youth, he told him that Jesus did all of his preaching before the age of thirty-three. He spoke with a certain formality, as though to assert the dignity of his office, showing only glimpses of the antic humor he had displayed onstage. Pastor Frank, as Santora is known, leads a church with a staff of nine pastors, seven laypeople, and eight hundred volunteers each month, plus the school, which has two hundred students. The church cost seventeen million dollars to build, and its annual budget is four and a half million dollars.

Santora was born in Brooklyn and raised on Staten Island. His family was Catholic, and he was an altar boy. When he was thirteen, the family moved to New Jersey, and his mother, in a desire for a more personal and direct experience of God, started to attend a Pentecostal church. Santora, because he liked the pastor, joined the church, too, and, as he put it, gave his life to Christ formally. His plan, he said, was to "become something successful in the world's eyes. . . . After that, I would serve God in the ministry." He went to Rutgers University, graduated with a degree in accounting, and joined an accounting firm with the intention of getting a law degree and becoming a C.P.A./attorney. But his career plans changed.

While still in college, he went to a seminar at the Rhema Bible Training Center, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The center had been founded in 1974 by Kenneth E. Hagin, a popular Pentecostal televangelist whom Santora's mother admired. *Rhema* means "spoken word" in ancient Greek, and Hagin preached that believers could be healed physically and financially if they invoked God's promise of an abundant life and had enough faith. At the center, Santora met the Reverend Anthony Storino, a New Jersey pastor and the regional director of the Rhema association for the Northeast. Another ex-Catholic, Storino had worked in his family's jukebox-and-pinball-machine business. When he was twenty-nine, he got saved and, a few years later, quit his job and went to Hagin's Bible school. He began a fellowship in his living room in 1984, and by the time he met Santora it had grown into a church of two hundred people. "I'm a street kid from New Jersey," Storino told me. "No formal education except for a year in community college, but I read a lot. At our church, we're Pentecostal from the top of our heads to the soles of our feet—and I'm a pretty animated preacher."

After Santora returned from Tulsa, he volunteered part time as a young-adults' pastor at Storino's church, and the two became close friends. A year later, Santora became engaged, and his fiancée, Lisa Du Bois, moved with her parents to Danbury, where she found a job teaching second grade at Bright Clouds Christian Church. The church had begun as a Bible-study group in a Danbury living room in 1983, and had moved, as it grew, to a doctor's office, then to a Ramada Inn conference room, and then to what had been an X-rated-movie theatre, before building its own church. Santora met the pastor, another Rhema graduate and a friend of Storino's, who offered him the job of assistant pastor. Santora accepted.

About four years later, Bright Clouds found itself in the midst of a crisis of the sort that small nondenominational churches rarely survive. The pastor was discovered to be having multiple affairs with women in the congregation. He resigned, and Santora took on his duties while the board decided what to do. Some people left the congregation, but Santora preached forgiveness for his former boss, and gradually began to pull the church together again. At some point, Storino—who is now a member of the executive board of Faith Church—told him that he couldn't go on running the church as a hireling. "You remember Nikita Khrushchev?" Storino asked me. "Well, I told Frank he should go into the board meeting and bang his shoe on the table, like Khrushchev at the U.N., and say that either they make you senior pastor or you'll start another church down the street. And, believe me, the congregation would have followed him." Santora demurred, and the tactic proved unnecessary. Not long afterward, the board found that the church had a million-dollar mortgage on it; Santora agreed to sign it, and was made senior pastor and head of the church corporation. "It worked out good," Storino said. "Frank turned that baby around." Santora was twenty-six years old, and, apart



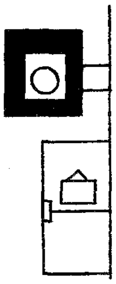
"What about my old age?"

from an extension course he had started at Rhema, he had no formal religious education.

A year or two later, Santora began to make the changes that would vastly increase the size of the church. Like Storino's church, Bright Clouds was a true Pentecostal church that taught spiritual warfare with the Devil and the approach of Armageddon; during worship, people spontaneously raised their arms in rapture, and sometimes spoke in tongues. Its particular theology came from Kenneth Hagin, whose doctrine of "Word of Faith" was controversial among evangelicals, some of whom ridiculed it as "name it and claim it." Then, too, Bright Clouds, after years of growth, had, like many small churches, become inwardly focussed: a family that took care of its own. Santora had completed his Rhema course under Storino's tutelage and been ordained as a minister by him. However, according to Storino, Santora always believed that it was his calling to reach out to people of all religious backgrounds.

By 2005, Santora had altered the whole identity of the church. Even before the move to New Milford, the name Bright Clouds Christian Church was dropped. "It sounded like an Indian reservation," one of the pastors told me. Also, to evangelicals, "Christian" has a denominational ring to it. The Faith Church motto became "Real people, real life, real faith," and its mission "to help people discover the winner within them through a growing relationship with Jesus Christ." Its worship style became less spontaneous and enthusiastic, and Santora preached on the problems of daily life. Faith Church today teaches Pentecostal theology in advanced Bible-study courses and holds special healing services once a month, but Santora rarely preaches on Pentecostal doctrine or speaks of Armageddon at the Sunday-morning services. "Sundays are about real life, inspiration, and hope," he told me. "What good is it to have somebody know the ins and outs of eschatology if their marriage is falling apart, their kids are in all sorts of trouble, and they can't keep a job?" Instead of Hagin's doctrine, Santora preaches thinking positively about God's purposes for one's life. He said, "I believe that God wants the best for us. I believe that Jesus paid the price on the Cross for not just our sins to be done away with but for our bodies to be healthy and for us to be successful and blessed."

Ray Martin, the pastor of the children's church, and a former Assemblies of God minister with a great deal of experience in other large churches, explained that Faith Church, although Pentecostal to its core, had to be "culturally sensitive." "Here's the deal," he said. "Demographically, most of the people in our area come from a Catholic background. For our main worship services to be centrally Pentecostal and charismatic is just too big of a step for a lot of those people." It's not, he said, that the church discourages such practices as speaking in tongues, "but we're targeting our culture, and only one per cent of people around here are Pentecostal." Santora estimates that fifty per cent of the congregation comes from Catholic, mainline Protestant, and Baptist backgrounds—the majority of them Catholics—and that only twenty to twenty-five per cent are Pentecostals.



Santora also plays down his politics. He holds conventional Christian-right views, but in the several sermons I heard him give he did not mention politics, and the angry militancy of the Christian right seemed foreign to his messages of hope and positive thinking. Santora explained that he did speak out about issues such as abortion and gay marriage around election time, but that otherwise he didn't preach on politics, and that he believed in treating everyone with love and respect. "I tell people that God isn't a Republican or a Democrat," he said. Faith Church is, after all, in a blue state, where the evangelicals tend to be politically centrist, and in his racially mixed congregation there are some Democrats.

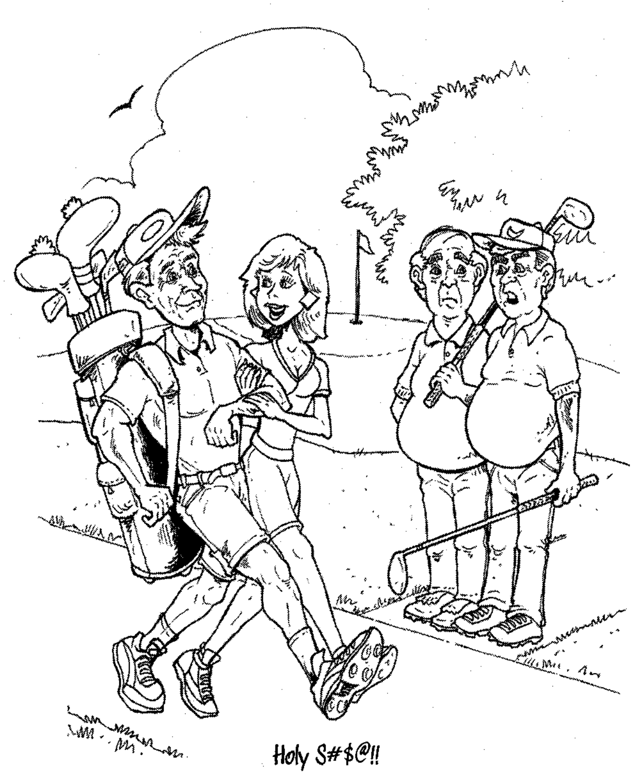
In creating Faith Church, Santora has closely followed the model of the "seeker church," which was developed three decades ago. Its origins lie in two very different phenomena. One was the Jesus movement of the nineteen-sixties, in which crowds of young Californians in torn bluejeans who had rejected the church of their parents flocked to tents where musicians strummed guitars and preachers such as John Wimber led emotionally charged, ritual-free services. The other was the ministry of Robert H. Schuller, the televangelist and builder of the Crystal Cathedral, in Garden Grove, California. As a young minister in the Reformed Church in America, Schuller had been sent in 1955 to plant a church in Orange County, only to find that there were very few families of his denomination in the area, and that about half the population didn't go to church at all. He rang hundreds of doorbells asking people why, and what kind of church would attract them. On the basis of their answers, he built a church with a huge parking lot, greeters to welcome new "customers," and Sunday services with inspirational talks by Norman Vincent Peale and sermons of his own on positive thinking. "I advocated and launched what has become known as the marketing approach to Christianity," Schuller later claimed.

But the basic model of the seeker church was developed by younger and more orthodox pastors, who shared the view that the way to reach the irreligious was to lower the threshold between the church and the secular world, without compromising the essential evangelical message. Warren and Hybels, as young preachers in the late nineteen-seventies and early eighties, surveyed the burgeoning white suburbs where they had chosen to start their churches. People commonly complained that churches were boring, unfriendly, lacking in child care, and irrelevant to their concerns. "Religion" signified hard pews, arcane doctrines, and spiritual inauthenticity. The answer was to create an informal, relaxed atmosphere, and to deal with the problems of everyday life. Warren points out, in his primer "The Purpose-Driven Church," that the adults who are most receptive to joining a new church are those in transition (a move, a new job) and those in pain, from, say, a broken marriage, financial trouble, or substance abuse. The church was therefore to provide assistance and to establish small affinity groups to foster a sense of belonging; and pastors were to preach to people's "felt needs" and to their culture. In general, the boomers and their successors wanted relief, as opposed to guilt; they wanted good news, not more bad news. More than previous generations, they believed in tolerance and in the freedom of the individual; on the other hand, they wanted a set of rules for the conduct of a successful life—"moral guard rails," as Hybels puts it.

Hybels and Warren had to invent, but today's aspiring pastors can find a great deal of help and expert advice on how to build a very large church. Books, magazines, and Web sites offer information on everything from parking management to the sociology of congregations. Successful pastors lecture on leadership, and church-growth consulting has become a small industry. The Willow Creek Association and Warren's Purpose-Driven Church Network hold conferences and, at a small price, offer pastors a wealth of resources from sermons to seminars on the recruitment and training of volunteers.

Santora frankly acknowledges his debt to Warren and many others for the church-growth strategies he practices. Faith Church is a member of the Willow Creek Association, and Santora has sent members of his staff to a Willow Creek conference to learn how to put on theatrical productions. Willow Creek is not a Pentecostal church, but Santora reads its pastors' sermons for inspiration. He pays attention to the megachurches he considers the most innovative, such as Craig Groeschel's Life Church, in Edmond, Oklahoma, which incorporates Internet technologies into its services. Three of Santora's board members head large evangelistic organizations, and Maurilio Amorim, a church-growth consultant, brings him ideas on media and marketing.

Formerly the executive pastor of a megachurch in Nashville, Amorim heads a small Tennessee company that includes Web-site designers, graphic artists, and production directors. "We're a boutique firm that creates a brand for churches," he told me. Amorim's Web site shows his hand in the branding of Faith Church. ("Real hope for real people in the real world" was the motto of his Nashville church.) "We're trying to create a culture, not just products," he said. Amorim meets with Santora every other month in part to plan "a marketing blitz" around a six-to-eight-week-long sermon series. "In fall, when the kids go back to school,



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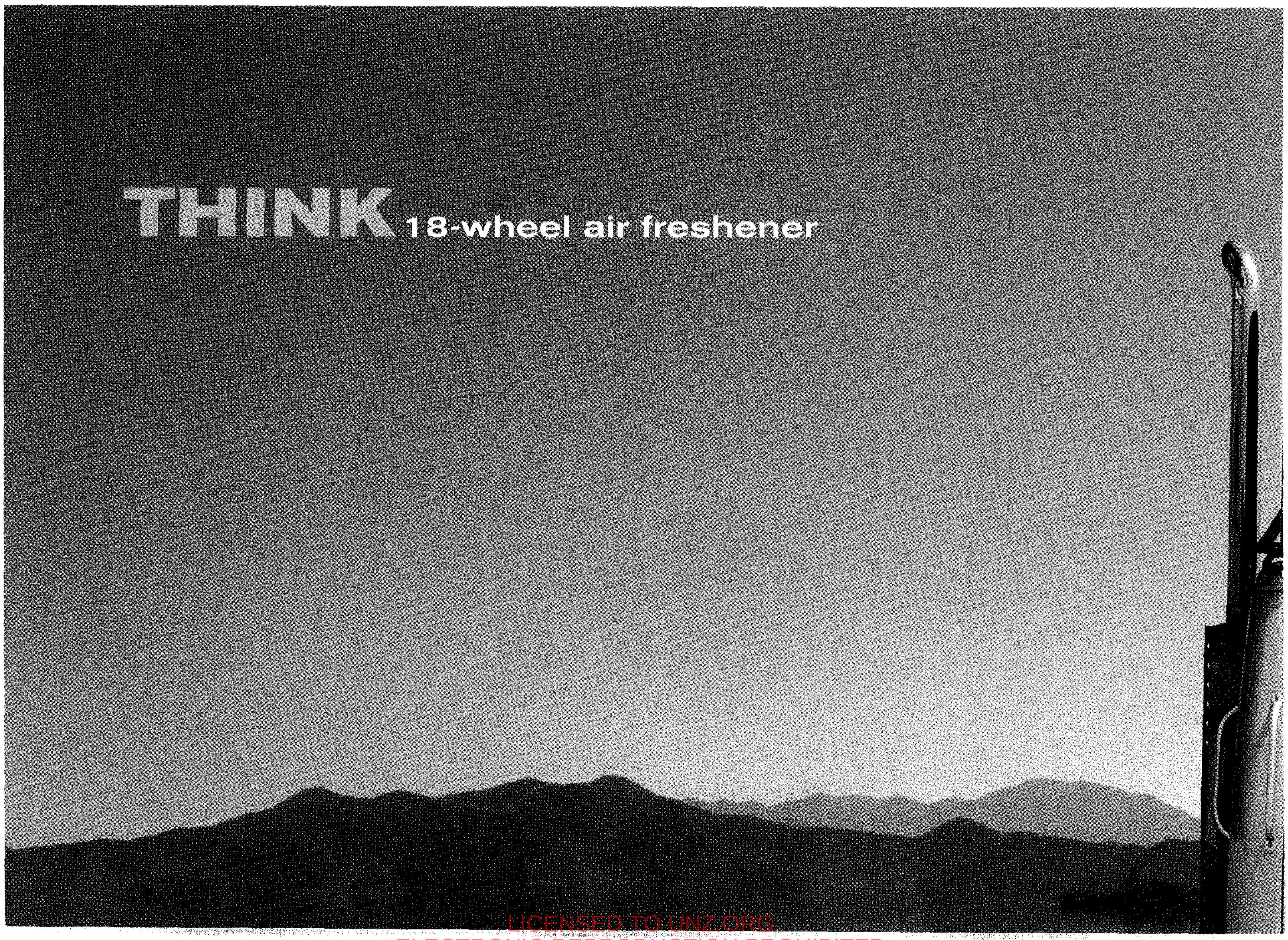
Frank usually does a series such as 'My Messy Family,' " Amorim said, "and in January, just after New Year's Day, he does a series on fresh starts. Those are the best times for advertising." For these series, Amorim puts together a package that includes a direct-mail piece, a thirty-second TV spot, graphic banners on the Faith Church Web site, a microsite, and mini-invitations that church members can give out to friends. Amorim also helps the pastors design church bulletins and elements of the services, such as songs, videos, and stage props, which will engage church attendees in the message before Santora speaks.

Santora's strategic plan for the next few years includes hiring more pastors and adding more weekend worship services, more small groups, and more community-service programs, and there will be an emphasis on developing new programs for youth and young adults. Last spring, Santora launched a five-year, five-million-dollar capital campaign, to pay off part of the ten-million-dollar mortgage on the new building, to increase the church's support for foreign missions, and to construct a one-and-a-half-million-dollar youth center in a building next to the church. The center, as Santora envisions it, will have a sanctuary, an iPod lounge, a café, a bowling alley, a basketball court, pool tables, video games, a dance floor, and a skateboard park. Its purpose is to serve Faith Church kids, but also to harbor a program for troubled teens and to provide students from the local high schools with a safe place to hang out. It's part of the mission, Santora said, "to reach kids who have no interest in spiritual things or in Christ."

Scott Thumma, at the Hartford Institute, says that megachurch pastors need to have a very different set of skills than those required of small-church pastors. According to his data, a third of all megachurch pastors do not have seminary degrees; and in younger churches the less formal religious training a pastor has, the higher the growth rate of his church is likely to be. Thumma thinks there are two reasons for this. First, pastors without seminary training are less removed from secular life, and less liable to speak "churchese." Second, and just as important, religious training has nothing to do with the entrepreneurial and managerial talents required to build and run a very large church.

Megachurches are, after all, to small churches as corporations are to mom-and-pop stores. More than a quarter of them have satellites in other locations. (McLean Bible Church, in Washington, D.C., for example, is planning to build ten satellites in a "spiritual beltway" around the city, to bring everyone in "secular Washington" to Christ.) Many megachurches have missions in inner cities or abroad, and many have planted other churches. Saddleback and Willow Creek have formed associations of thousands of smaller evangelical churches to help them grow: associations that have some of the attributes of a denomination. Yet even the smaller,

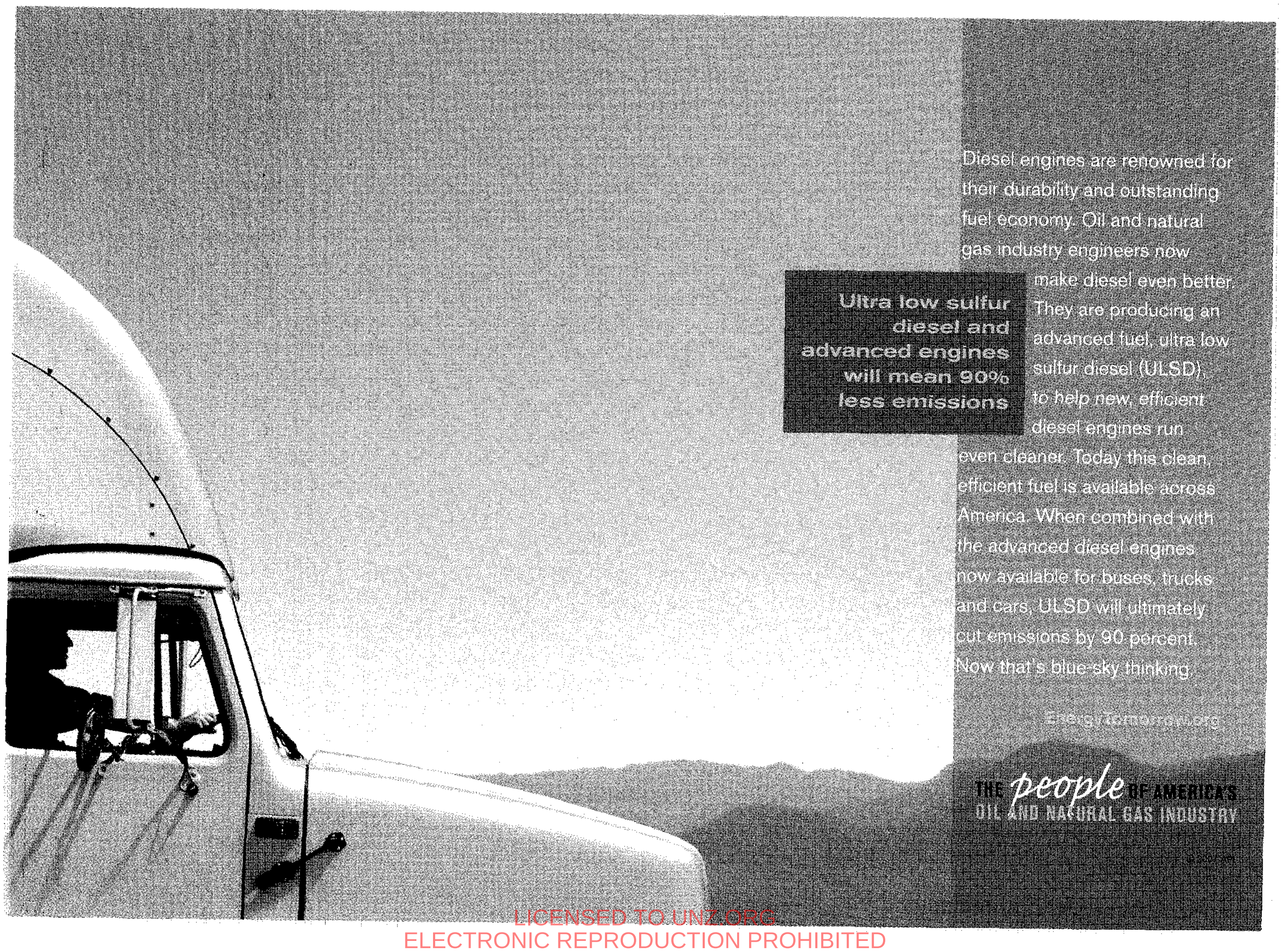


single-site megachurches are complex organizations with specialized pastoral staffs and lay staffs that handle administration and programming.

Megachurch leaders are C.E.O.s, and many of them, particularly the seeker-church pastors, have borrowed techniques from big business. Hybels and Warren learned not just from Schuller but from the management expert Peter Drucker, and have themselves become experts on the management and marketing of churches. Of all the megachurches, Willow Creek, the subject of a Harvard Business School study, must be the most professionally run: Hybels's executive pastor, Gregg Hawkins, graduated from Stanford Business School and worked for McKinsey & Company; his communications director is a former executive of Allstate Insurance; and the author of the Harvard Business School study is now the head of the Willow Creek Association.

Santora, in turn, has been making Faith Church's operations more professional. The youth pastor and the new pastor of ministries—like Ray Martin, the children's pastor—have had experience in other megachurches, and all three were hired after national searches for specialists in their fields. To deal with administration and finances, Santora has drawn from his congregation two men without religious training but with careers in business. His own training in accounting has also proved useful. The church finances, he explained, have to be audited each year, because of the mortgage. "I don't mean to sound arrogant," he said, "but I know if the accountants made a mistake."

Some evangelical pastors and scholars—typically from fundamentalist or Calvinist denominations—have attacked Saddleback and Willow Creek as market-driven churches that cater to the society's insatiable demand for entertainment. They have also charged Warren and Hybels with preaching a Christianity lite, in which theology is marginal and the Gospel is mixed up with pop psychology. Their teaching, these critics say, is "me-centered," rather than God-centered, and it proposes that people are basically good, rather than essentially sinful and in need of salvation. Seeker-church pastors, they say, argue that the Scriptures help to heal pain and bring self-fulfillment, but in doing so they are suggesting that the Bible is true just because it works. Furthermore, their God seems to be a domesticated, useful deity—a God without wrath who demands no sacrifices from his children. (John MacArthur, the pastor of Grace Community Church, in Sun Valley, California, whose "Grace to You" radio shows are broadcast nationally, has written, "Salesmanship requires that negative subjects like divine wrath be avoided. Consumer satisfaction means that the standard of righteousness cannot be raised too high. The seeds of a watered-down Gospel are thus sown in the very philosophy that drives many ministries today.") In sum, seeker churches, in their attempt to be "relevant" and "cul-



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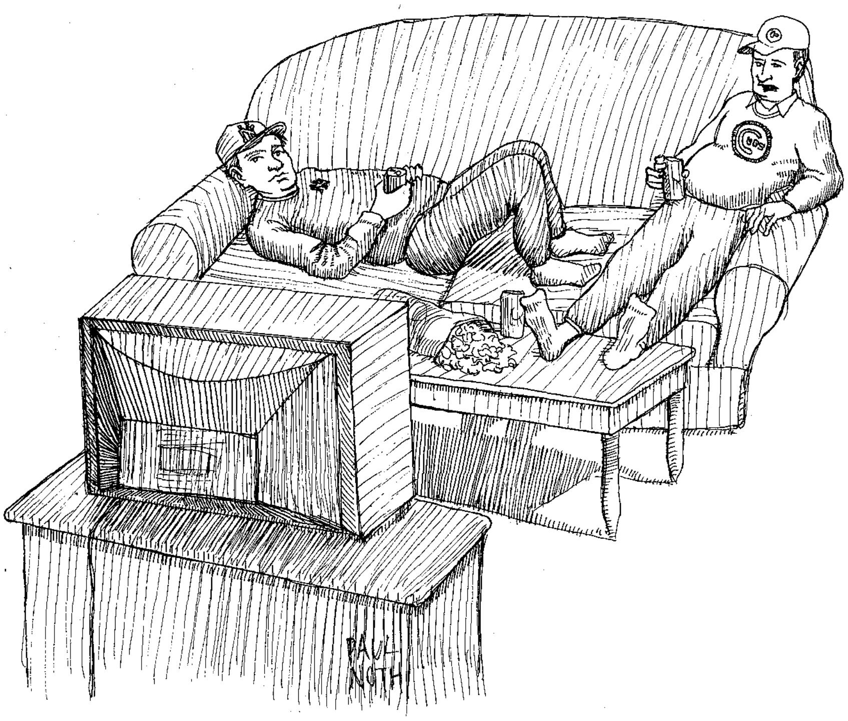

"Hey, if you could take a drug that made you better at watching TV, wouldn't you?"

turally sensitive," are giving in to the secular culture.

Hybels and Warren reject these criticisms. God cares for the lost, they argue, and turning the irreligious into mature Christians is necessarily a process. The first step is to capture their attention and to deal with their "felt needs," as Jesus did when he healed the sick. But that is only the first step. Saddleback sermons, Warren wrote, have catchy titles, but beneath them is a hard-core Biblical message. Then those who come to Sunday services can continue their spiritual journey in Bible-study classes, mentoring groups, and participation in church activities, until they become fully devoted followers of Christ. Recently, however, Hybels has changed his mind somewhat on the efficacy of this process. In 2004, as part of an exercise in strategic planning, Gregg Hawkins brought on a consumer-research expert to measure spiritual growth at Willow Creek and six other churches. The study, published this year, revealed that one out of four churchgoers—and the most committed of them—felt stalled in their growth or dissatisfied with their church. They felt that participation in church activities and small groups had helped them, but only up to a point. Hybels called the data "earth-shaking" and concluded that the church had to rethink its coaching strategies so that the faithful learned to depend less on the church and more on themselves. He proposed creating "customized personal spiritual-growth plans" for everyone in the church.

Santora maintains that his teaching, though seeker-oriented, is wholly orthodox. He does teach the Bible, even though, as he says, he emphasizes the positive. "Different ministries are called to emphasize different aspects of God," he explained. "The unique calling, if you will, that God has given me is to teach people how to be successful through practical teachings that apply to everyday life." Further, he believes that his use of psychology is fully Biblical. He has just written a book titled "Identity Crisis," which, like the sermon on the CD that Faith Church gives out to newcomers, explains how to shed a negative self-image. There is, he said, a connection between self-esteem and Jesus' commandment to love God and to love your neighbor *as* yourself.

In Maurilio Amorim's opinion, New England is still the hardest place in the country to work as a church-growth consultant. Local television, he says, doesn't bring very many people to church there, and direct mail isn't as effective as it is elsewhere. Amorim believes that the main problem lies in the "bigger disconnect between the culture and the church." What he means is that church is not a pervasive way of life, as it is in the South. But there are other reasons. In Thumma's view, the strength and independence of the New England towns has militated against the development of regional churches. People just don't like to leave town in order to go to church. Also, in these towns, the civic culture has been shaped by the Protestant churches on the town greens, and the Catholics have fully participated in it. In New Milford, the clergy—mainline Protestants, Catholics, and Jews—long ago reached an unwritten agreement to respect one another's boundaries and to coöperate in community-service programs. (As a part of this agreement, they don't send mailings to members of other churches; Faith Church, of course, does.) In the urban and suburbanized parts of southern Connecticut, the towns may be losing their coherence, for regional churches have begun to spring up. All the same, New England remains a hard place to build a megachurch. "I tell Frank that Faith Church would be twice as big if it were anywhere else," Amorim said. "I tell him that he is working extremely hard for incremental growth. If you plopped the church down in Houston, it would be huge! He gets all worked up when I say that."

Santora, however, is undeterred. He and his pastors are already looking forward to the day when they can launch a satellite church in another quarter of the Danbury area—though the congregation will have to grow by a thousand before they can do that. "I think that we can be ten thousand," Santora said. "And I think that as we approach that my number will change again! There are four hundred thousand people in the greater Danbury area. My joke at pastors' get-togethers is 'I just want fifty thousand—split up the rest.' " ♦

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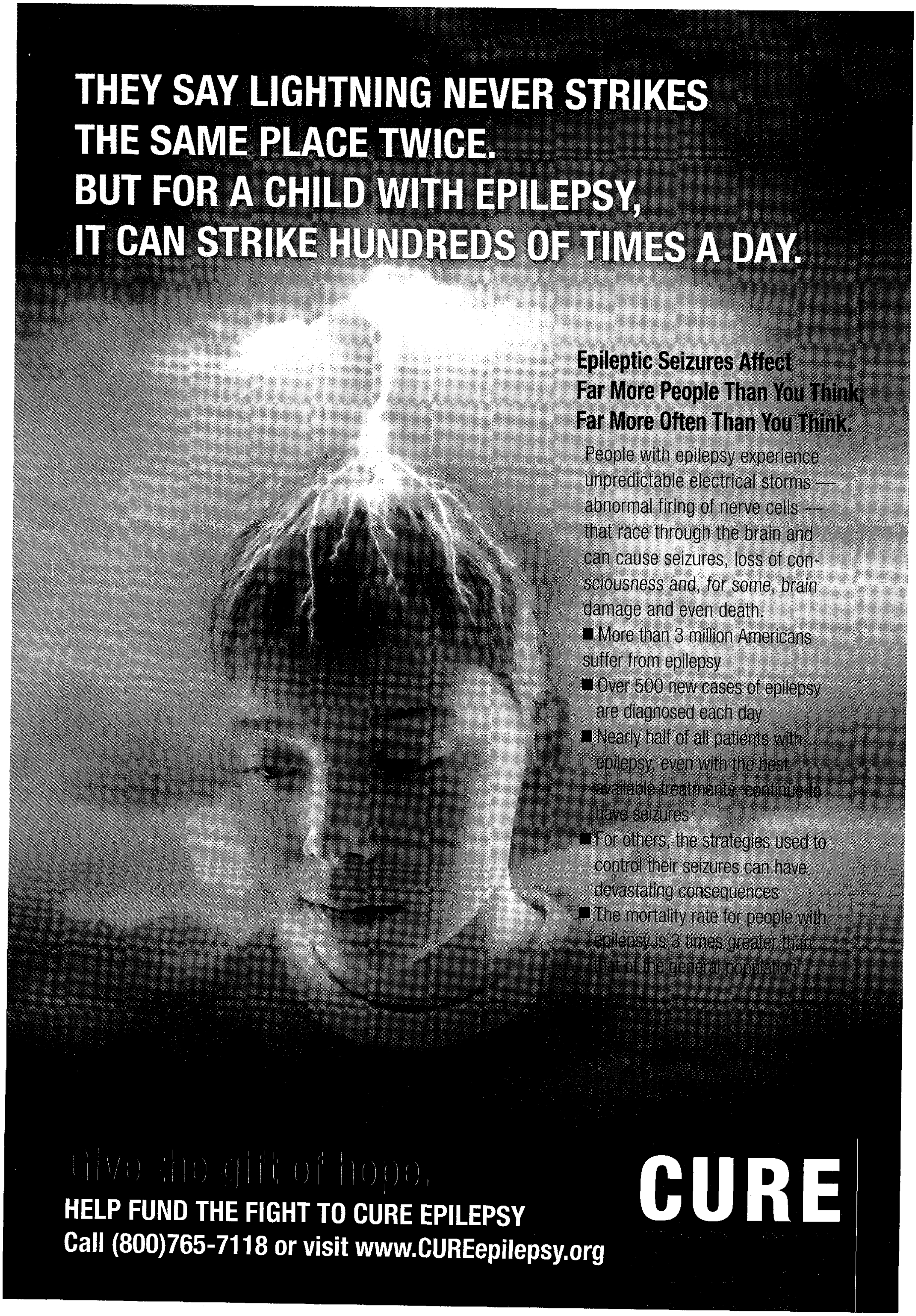
More photographs of Faith Church.



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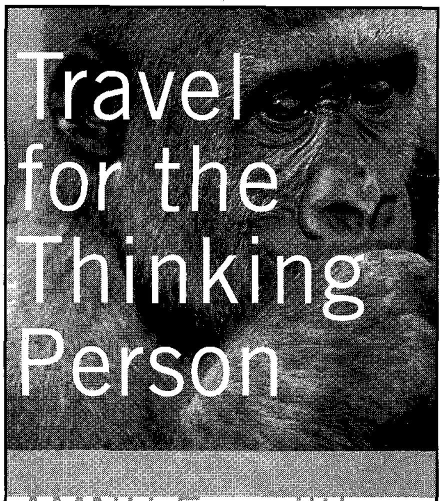

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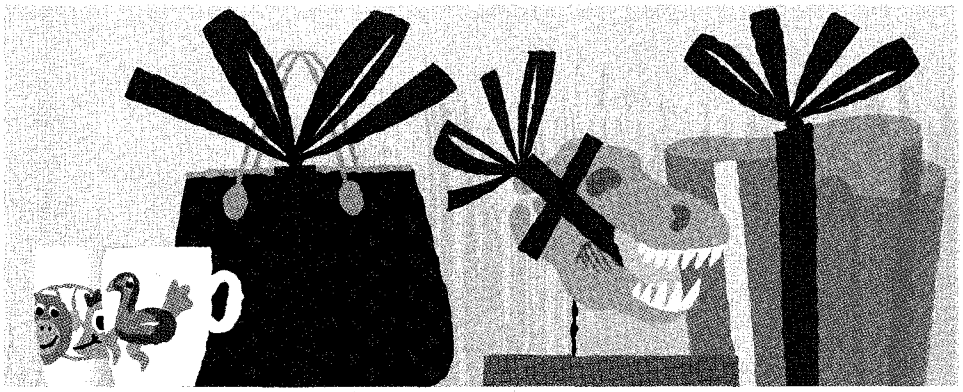
ON AND OFF THE AVENUE

ART AND COMMERCE

A guide to the museum (gift shop).

BY PATRICIA MARX

Not so very long ago, while making my way through a droll little house museum in the South of France, I mistook a well-appointed drawing room for the gift shop. So, in what I thought was the tabletop department, I picked up a Louis the Somethingth something and, finding no price tag on the bottom, turned to the guard-salesclerk and asked, “*Combien?*” I did not acquire said objet. (Art 1, Mercantilism 0.)



The times, it seems, have caught up to me. Bang in the middle of the new Murakami retrospective at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, there is a Louis kiosk—Louis Vuitton, that is. The museum receives no revenue or rental income from the boutique, since the store is owned and operated by LVMH Moët Hennessy (limited-edition handbags, $870-$960). (Art 1, Mercantilism 1.)

For anyone who still thinks of museums as places to view valuable works of art, you should know that they are also outlets for tchotchkes that are rich in pedigree and provenance. Within the walls of our cultural institutions—usually by the entrance, before you have to pay admission—you can find both high-priced low art (chocolate-chip cookies in a tin inspired by the Guggenheim skylight, at the Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Avenue at 89th Street; $18) and low-priced high art (“Balustrade,” a lithograph and woodcut with chine collé and collage by Betty Woodman, in a limited edition of thirty, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street; $2,000).

Please let it be understood that I am not a practicing philistine. When attending an art exhibit, I often check out the lesser works—even some that haven’t been ennobled with a stop on the audio tour. I know that Art Nouveau is less new than Art Deco and that the Arts and Crafts movement has nothing to do with lanyards. And yet how many Old Masters masterpieces can you gaze at before your vertebrae go on strike and you yearn to see a price tag?

After all, permanent collections are just that: they stay put. Meanwhile, any moment now the National Academy Museum and School of Fine Arts (Fifth Avenue at 89th Street) could sell out of the fanciful wall clock constructed of twelve vintage teacups and saucers, each porcelain pair denoting an hour ($315). There are no novelties here, so don’t expect Winslow Homer snow globes or Ashcan-school wastebaskets. And there’s plenty more booty nearby. Museum Mile, the stretch of Fifth Avenue from Eighty-second to 105th Street that is home to nine museums, might just as well refer to the distance spanned if you lined up, end to end, all the paperweights, mouse pads, and refrigerator magnets with reproductions of famous paintings on them. Start with a paperweight with Sir Thomas

JOSÉ LUIS MERINO

More detail, at the Frick Collection (1 East 70th Street; $10.95) and follow with Van Gogh Mighty Magnets, at the Met ($10.46 for ten).

There's menorah mania in the gift shop at the Jewish Museum—which, considering the many exhibits that feature artists such as Pissarro or Soutine, could easily be called the "I Didn't Know They Were Jewish!" Museum (Fifth Avenue at 92nd Street). You can choose among more than a hundred menorahs, including candelabra shaped like giraffes, bones, and mopeds ($240, $160, and $45). This, absolutely, is the place to come for your Judaica needs, including a sleek silver mezuzah designed by Christofle ($210) and a colorful Bagels and Locks bagel plate, with imagery of keys and padlocks, which will cause your guests to smile or groan ($29.95). Every book related to Judaism, however remotely, seems to be available here, except, as I overheard a saleswoman tell a disappointed customer, there is no book about the Book of Daniel.

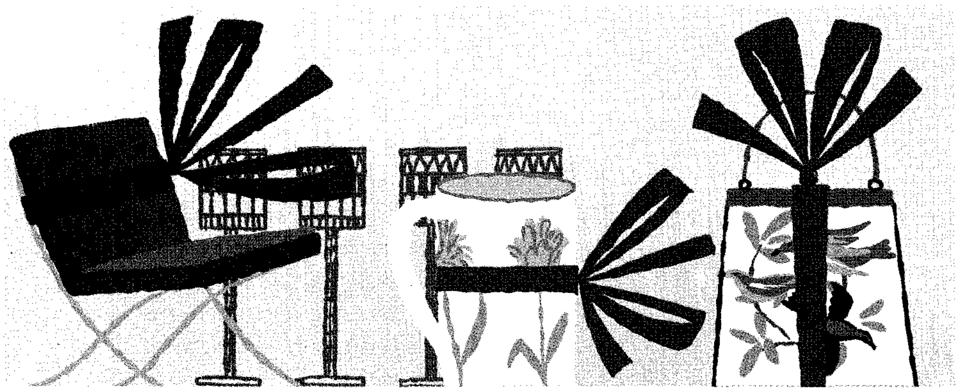
Looking for Brazil's leftovers? They can be found, stylishly refashioned, at El Museo del Barrio, one of the few museums in the city representing the art and culture of the Caribbean and Latin America (Fifth Avenue at 104th Street). There are vases made from recycled inner tubes ($25), change purses made from rubber balls ($10), and large baskets woven from old newspapers that would be very handy for storing the old newspapers that you are planning to turn into large baskets ($42).

Next door, at the Museum of the City of New York, there is more detritus, and it might be good for everyone if you hauled it away. Attached to each of the aggressively mod tote bags recycled from banners that once promoted museum events are inspiring words: "Congratulations! You have become part of the solution to the problem of the homeless in New York City. What's more, you're helping the environment" ($29.95).

That's enough civic duty. Now let's get back to helping you and only you. The Neue Galerie (Fifth Avenue at 86th Street), showcasing early-twentieth-century German and Austrian art, occupies a Louis XIII-style mansion and has a design shop where you can get exquisite things—though it may be that only Louis XIII can afford them. I'm pretty sure I can't live without the Art Deco silver-plate cutlery copied from a 1906 Josef Hoffman pattern (six-piece place setting, $270). And I'd really better have a dozen of the Otto Prutscher 1907 handblown ladder-stem wineglasses, in case the Klimt Klub drops by ($695 a glass).

Should anyone want to gift wrap these treats for me, the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum (2 East 91st Street) has the prettiest ribbon, maybe, in the world. The tapestrylike textiles are decorated with Wayne Thiebaud-ish cakes ($13 for two yards) and Victorian-inspired trees ($25). A neighboring vitrine holds clever trompe-l'œil adhesive tape that is made to look like a rococo gold frame—"enabling you to set up your own museum!," according to a label ($15).

Down the street, at one of the thirteen gift shops inside the Met, you can acquire a wing's worth of stuff for your own museum. But you don't even have to travel to the grand structure on Fifth Avenue. Satellite Met stores—the McDonald's of the Beaux Arts—sell mugs and scarves in forty locations worldwide, including airports and malls (tulip mug, based on a seventeenth-century botanical watercolor, $15; Hiroshige scarf, in burgundy or green, based on a woodcut by the famous landscape artist, $110). As everyone knows, the Met's flagship shop has one of the



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most comprehensive assortments of books around. But does everyone know about the art mart in the mezzanine gallery? You can purchase original prints by established artists ("Untitled," by Ellsworth Kelly, $4,500), limited-edition books (facsimile of the Book of Hours given by Charles IV to his third wife, $5,300), and one-of-a-kind Turkish rugs ($475 to $5,500). If you still have some spare change, you can get rid of it in the Great Hall Luxury Boutique, which sells major jewelry inspired by select exhibits (diamond-and-ruby flower necklace evoking the jewelry of Mughal India, $38,750).

Or you can drop your extra coins into a funky handbag with a resin-appliqué Audubon bird watercolor, available at the New-York Historical Society (Central Park West at 77th Street).

The Morris-Jumel Mansion, Manhattan's oldest house (1765), off West 162nd Street in Harlem (between Amsterdam and Edgecombe), was General Washington's headquarters for a few months during the Revolutionary War. When I visited the gift shop, the plaster bust of the Founding Father ($22) was sold out. "I had a woman buy one and she returned it because her husband thought it was indecent," Barbara Snyder, who has worked the cash register here for thirty-four years, said. "George didn't have a shirt on. But then another woman came and bought two of them. She didn't have a husband, I guess." What else is hot at the mansion? "Bugs! My No. 1 seller!" Snyder said, referring to rubbery toy insects ($1) and showing me a chart she'd made to keep track of every item sold. "Tin flutes are a deal. We sell a lot of those"—at $6.95 apiece. "And all the Mitchell cookbooks—even the adults buy them." These cookbooks are reprints of various eighteenth-century recipe booklets that describe how to make, among other treats, Mama's Modern Health Gingerbread and An Interpretation of E. Smith's Syllabub ($5). What's best here, though, is Snyder's stories (priceless). Ask her about the time she offered Katharine Hepburn half a sandwich after she saw her in the garden, talking to some porcelain dolls, and assumed that she was homeless. Hepburn wrote Snyder a thank-you note for introducing her to provolone.

A tip for sloppy eaters: put on a Jackson Pollock tie and dribble away (Guggenheim Museum; $48)!

Have you noticed that no matter how small-fry a museum might be, and no matter how many miles it might be from Manhattan, you can always find an Alvar Aalto undulating glass vase ($55, $100, or $135, depending on size), an M&Co crumpled-paper paperweight ($22), a Harri Koskinen light bulb in a glass brick ($110), and a miniature chair (for instance, the Mies Barcelona chair, $370)? Thank you, Museum of Modern Art (11 West 53rd Street) for having MOMA-fied every cultural institution on earth. It should be noted that, ubiquitous or not, the MUJI T-shirt made of reused yarn is a Missoni look-alike but not a price-alike ($26 for the long-sleeved; $20 for the short-sleeved).

You won't find the stuff sold by the gift shop in the Studio Museum of Harlem (144 West 125th Street) at other stores; that's because most of it comes from local artisans. I love the Sophia Loren Coffee jewelry, particularly the hanging-disk earrings, which are made of shell and glitter-spattered and painted with a portrait of Madame C. J. Walker, the first self-made black woman millionaire ($40). Nora Fleischmann's necklace incorporating three kinds of green stone, green suède,

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and sterling silver ($90) is also terrific, as are the Sing Sing dinner trays in sturdy neon-orange melamine ($13.50); the Battery-Eater, an unnecessary but amusing little gizmo that drains the juice from your AAs as its L.E.D. light-bulb eyes blink on and off ($5); and a digital clock with spindly steel swinging legs that looks as if it might be good for a lunar landing ($79.50).

In a field where there are so many qualified candidates, first prize in mugs goes to Emily Perlman's glazed ceramics in a mousy gray with rusty-brown accents, at the Museum of Arts and Design (40 West 53rd Street; $36). The prize for most-overpriced mugs and underpriced coffee—or vice versa—is awarded to the gift box containing two Jeff Koons mugs and 8.8 ounces of Illy coffee (Guggenheim; $50). And this year's Dubious Origins medal goes to the Astor Place subway-tile mug, which is made in Thailand (at the New York Transit Museum, Schermerhorn Street at Boerum Place, Brooklyn Heights, and in Grand Central; $14). Hold on to your receipt, by the way. The last thing you need is the Ambassador from Thailand knocking on your door, demanding that you give back his culture's sacred relic which you apparently smuggled out of the country.

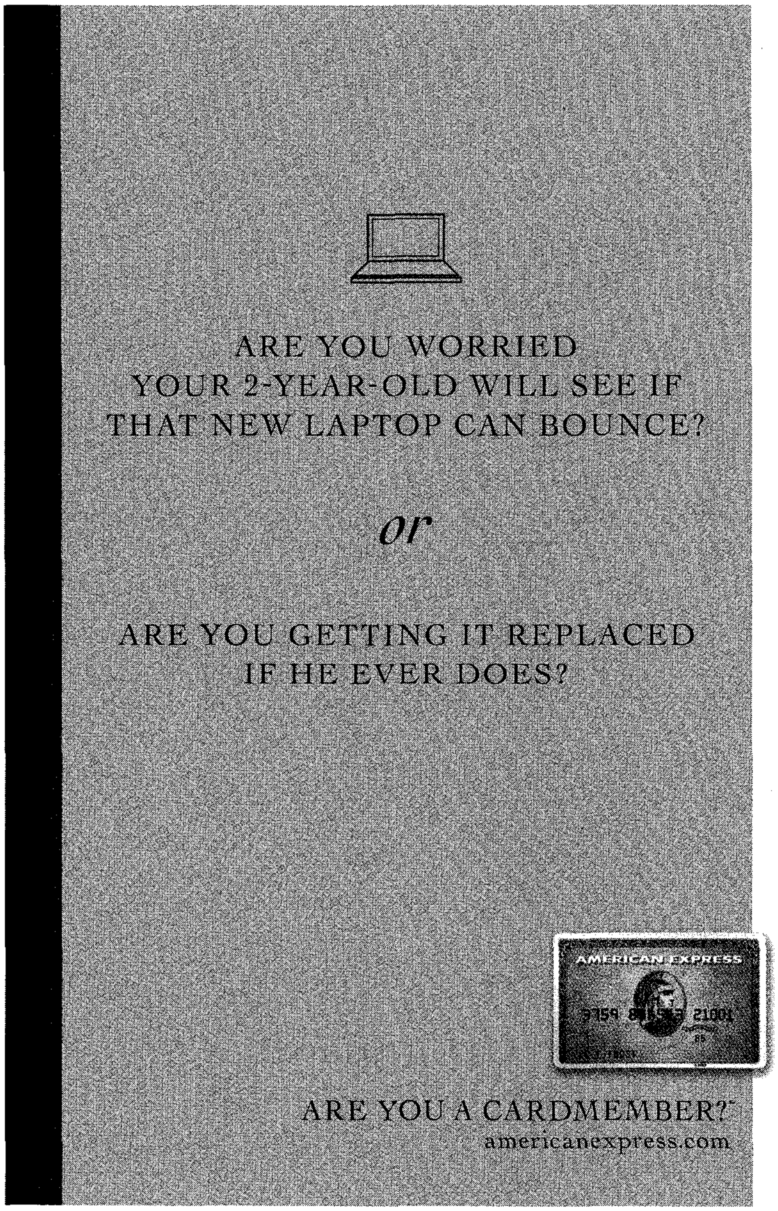
Now that I've mentioned mugs, it behooves me to comment on postcards. Everyone sells them. But one thing you never see: postcards of mugs.

One of my favorite museums, the American Folk Art Museum (45 West 53rd Street), had an exhibit earlier this year of one of my favorite artists, the catatonic schizophrenic Martín Ramírez. The show is long gone, but the catalogue lives on ($55). Some of the other merchandise in the cramped gift-shop space is way too "Ye Olde" for me, but then there are doormats crafted from flip-flops ($36), a Christmas wreath made out of recycled sweaters ($59), and coloring books with pictures of food ($4.50).

A gift shop that could probably draw clientele even without its museum sidekick is the Museum of Sex (233 Fifth Avenue; I've been told that the audio tours are very stimulating). In a dim room on the ground floor, the shop has a somewhat scant collection of doodads, less raunchy than cheesy—a package of Titaroni Booby-Shaped Pasta ($6.99), his-and-hers genitalia key holders ($25), condom lollipops ($2.99). But what do I know? I had to eavesdrop on a group of teen-agers in order to figure out what half the items were. (The answer was always a vibrator.) Incidentally, their mugs are $6.99.

On the other hand, a museum that is so excellent that it almost doesn't need to peddle curios is the Lower East Side Tenement Museum (97 Orchard Street). I dare you to go on a tour of the run-down 1863 building and not think, This brownstone would make a good fixer-upper. Across the street, in the gift shop (108 Orchard Street), which is teeming with New York-related knickknacks, I watched for a good long time as a couple tried to decide which laminated sign to buy: "Irish Need Not Apply" or "Italians Always Welcome" ($10 each). The shop also has a nice selection of books for both adults and children.

If your Lower East Side literature needs straightening, sprint over to the main building of the New York Public Library (Fifth Avenue at 42nd Street) and pick up a set of marble-and-resin bookends, replicas of Patience and Fortitude, the lions that flank the library's



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steps—standing guard or, perhaps, waiting for the M2 bus ($150 a pair).

Of course, you could forgo books altogether, in favor of their needlepoint versions—in which case you might like the Morgan Library and Museum's bookshelf pillow, with its depiction of leather-bound volumes lined up in a bookcase (Madison Avenue at 36th Street; $139). I don't think you'll have trouble reading the fine stitch, but if so the magnifying glass modelled after Leonardo's eyepiece will do the trick ($29.95).

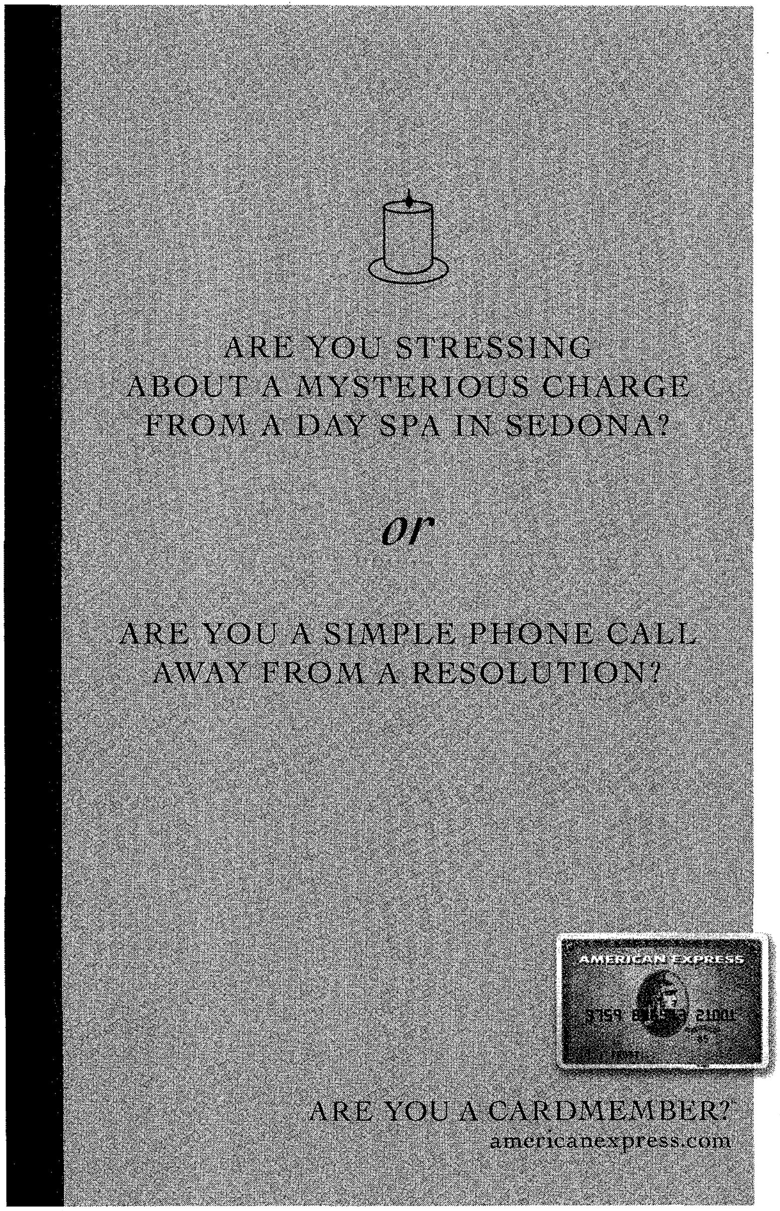
A visit to the Asia Society's Asia Store (Park Avenue at 70th Street) will convince you that Asians spend a lot of time pleating. Check out the line of Richard Tsao puckered jackets and the accessories by Han Feng—especially her shimmering shawls with holes that you can slip either your head or your arms through ($200). The dazzling plates by Nima Oberoi look as if they were made out of crinkled foil wrap (in gold, silver, or nickel; $20 and $55).

The focus of attention at the Rubin Museum of Art (150 West 17th Street) is the Himalayas, and in that region, though it is in Asia, they are apparently too busy trying to get the singing bowls to sing to have any time to pleat. "You have to be patient and practice for a long time," a salesgirl told me as she rubbed a wooden mallet around the rim of a beautiful hand-beaten metal bowl to produce a deep hum ($210 to $500). If you are fidgety or lazy, you might reach Nirvana sooner by just filling the bowl with nacho chips. There are quieter things of interest here, too—for instance, the cap made from turquoise, coral, and bone, but buyer beware: you need a strong neck to support the weight of this topper ($125).

When I was on a tour of Versailles a few years ago, a large Texan fellow in our group asked the guide, "Ma'am, what's the estimated value of this estate?" This came to mind when I walked into the magnificent Beaux Arts building designed by Cass Gilbert that is now the National Museum of the American Indian and was formerly the U.S. Custom House (1 Bowling Green). At the entrance, take note of the four sculptures representing the continents, considered by some to be the best examples of architectural sculpture in this country. Now go on in and shop. Here's some of what you could take home: a talking stick, which gives whoever is holding it the right to speak, and looks something like the visitors' key to the office rest room ($12.50); a Mexican sugar mold with which you can make miniature sugar or chocolate skulls to celebrate the Day of the Dead ($12); a hand-carved cedar flute ($50); a panel from a totem pole ($90); a Navajo alabaster sculpture of a buffalo ($80); a necklace of turquoise and silver notched beads ($255); a beaded cuff bracelet ($38); and as many obsidian arrowhead replicas as you have dollars.

The new New Museum, dedicated to contemporary art, is so new that it isn't open yet, but that doesn't mean you have to wait to shop there. Its online site (newmuseumstore.org) has lots of groovy things, including a crocheted takeoff on a wristwatch, by Clare Crespo ($60); a stainless-steel sugar bowl designed by the architects Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, which looks as if it came straight out of anime ($98); and a Yoshitomo Nara digital clock that has doodle-y drawings on each of its panels, which flip over every minute ($250).

The top seller at the New York City Fire Museum (278 Spring Street), especially among foreign firefighters, is the official F.D.N.Y. patch ($6). I believe,



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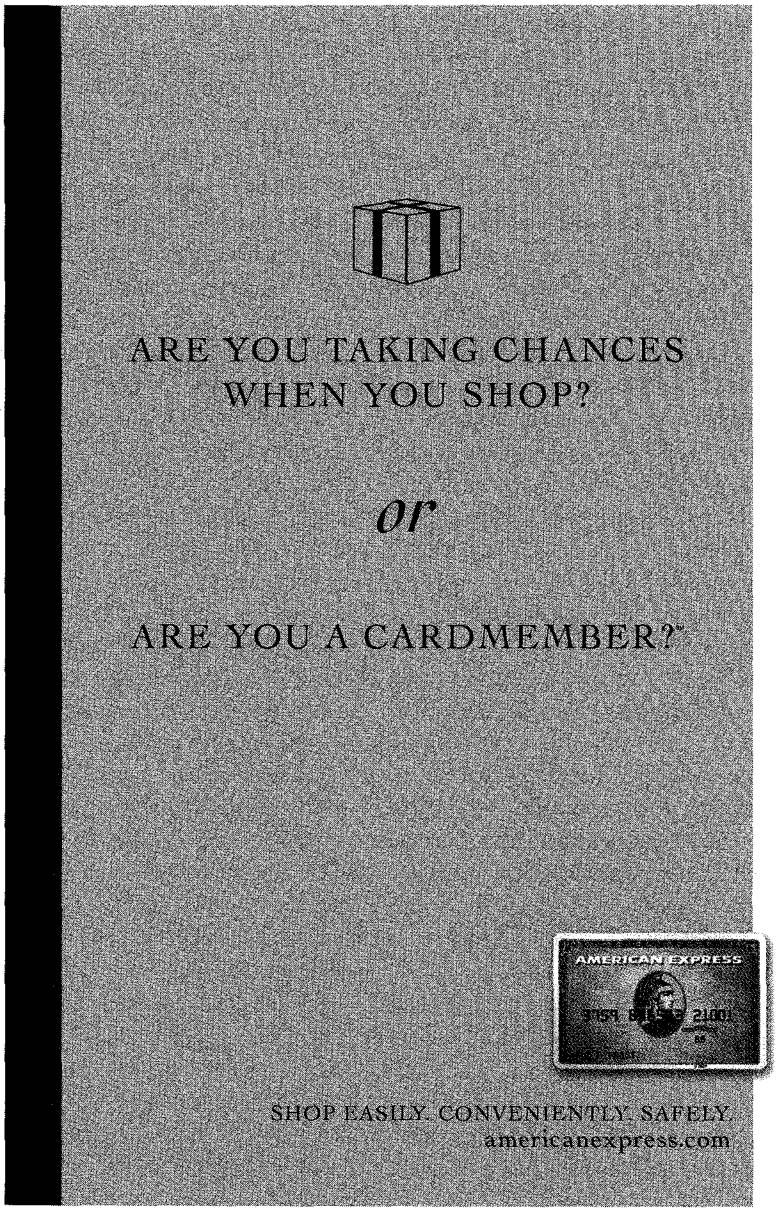
however, that the record-breaker should be the stuffed Dalmatian, which is the size of a two-year-old human and a bargain for a creature that you don't have to walk or feed ($40).

During this unusual interval in which I am not thinking of myself for a brief moment, I should mention that kids might like the wares at the Mount Vernon Hotel Museum and Garden (421 East 61st Street) and also the place itself—a restored 1799 carriage house, which, from 1826 until 1833, was a sort of day spa (one of about fifty then in the city). "We don't have a lot of mechanical or battery things like they have across the street at Bed Bath & Beyond," a docent named Bob, who reminded me of Mr. Rogers, said. In the museum's shop, he showed me reproductions of broadsheets spelling out "Rules of the Tavern" and "Curious Punishments of Colonial Days" ($5), goose-quill pens ($3), facsimiles of old playing cards without numbers ($8), candy sticks (40¢), and pig erasers (79¢). At the Ukrainian Museum (222 East 6th Street) there is a cool *pysanky* egg-dyeing kit for anyone who wants to get a head start on Easter ($19.50). The Brooklyn Museum (200 Eastern Parkway) has an edifying junior department with items such as an Ancient Mexican Stamp Kit ($19.95), a Basquiat jigsaw puzzle ($17.95), and an African Dance 4 Children Kit ($26). Kids would probably get a kick out of a functional cardboard pinhole camera; I would prefer a handsome teakwood-and-polished-brass limited-edition collector's pinhole camera, but I promised not to talk about myself for a few sentences (International Center of Photography, Sixth Avenue at 43rd Street; $30 and $150, respectively). Everybody, I think, would be delighted by an encounter with the Whitney Museum's Art-O-Mat, a refurbished cigarette-vending machine that dispenses cigarette-pack-size boxes of handmade art, each a surprise (Madison Avenue at 75th Street; $6.95 a pop).

The lollapalooza of kids' museums (not that grownups don't love it, too) is the American Museum of Natural History (Central Park West at 79th Street). For starters, it's your go-to place for rocks—for instance, a shiny hunk of pyrite, amethyst, citrine, or quartz ($15). And, if you like antiques, have a look at the ammonites, which are sixty-five million years old ($400). Your son or daughter might be amused by the Soda Can Robug, which emits noises as it crawls across the floor, but an in-store demonstration could send you running out the door ($16.95). Be careful as you leave, though. I heard a kid, approximately five years old, say to his younger brother, who was reaching to touch the foot of the huge Barosaurus skeleton standing sentry in the museum's rotunda, "You're going to be in trouble if you break that! Do you know how much a dinosaur costs?"

A sixty-seven-million-year-old T. rex named Sue, who is the size of a city bus and has a six-hundred-pound skull, was sold at auction in 1997 to the Field Museum, in Chicago ($8.36 million, the highest price ever paid for a fossil). The Field Museum's online store (store.fieldmuseum.org) sells the Sue Skull Snapper, a plastic replica of the dinosaur's head on a handle with a trigger mechanism for quick biting action ($4). There are also Sueson's Greetings ($7.50 for a box of fifteen note cards), and the Sue Skull replica—a one-third-scale bronze sculpture, which is twenty-six inches long and weighs two hundred and seventy pounds ($34,000).

(Chalk one up for both sides.) ♦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ANNALS OF SCIENCE

DARWIN'S SURPRISE

Why are evolutionary biologists bringing back extinct deadly viruses?

BY MICHAEL SPECTER

Thierry Heidmann's office, adjacent to the laboratory he runs at the Institut Gustave Roussy, on the southern edge of Paris, could pass for a museum of genetic catastrophe. Files devoted to the world's most horrifying infectious diseases fill the cabinets and line the shelves. There are thick folders for smallpox, Ebola virus, and various forms of influenza. SARS is accounted for, as are more obscure pathogens, such as feline leukemia virus, Mason-Pfizer monkey virus, and simian foamy virus, which is endemic in African apes. H.I.V., the best-known and most insidious of the viruses at work today, has its own shelf of files. The lab's beakers, vials, and refrigerators, secured behind locked doors with double-paned windows, all teem with viruses. Heidmann, a meaty, middle-aged man with wild eyebrows and a beard heavily flecked with gray, has devoted his career to learning what viruses might tell us about AIDS and various forms of cancer. "This knowledge will help us treat terrible diseases," he told me, nodding briefly toward his lab. "Viruses can provide answers to questions we have never even asked."

Viruses reproduce rapidly and often with violent results, yet they are so rudimentary that many scientists don't even consider them to be alive. A virus is nothing more than a few strands of genetic material wrapped in a package of protein—a parasite, unable to function on its own. In order to survive, it must find a cell to infect. Only then can any virus make use of its single talent, which is to take control of a host's cellular machinery and use it to churn out thousands of copies of itself. These viruses then move from one cell to the next, transforming each new host into a factory that makes even more virus. In this way, one infected cell soon becomes billions.

Nothing—not even the Plague—has posed a more persistent threat to humanity than viral diseases: yellow fever, measles, and smallpox have been causing epidemics for thousands of years. At the end of the First World War, fifty million people died of the Spanish flu; smallpox may have killed half a billion during the twentieth century alone. Those viruses were highly infectious, yet their impact was limited by their ferocity: a virus may destroy an entire culture, but if we die it dies, too. As a result, not even smallpox possessed the evolutionary power to influence humans as a species—to alter our genetic structure. That would require an organism to insinuate itself into the critical cells we need in order to reproduce: our germ cells. Only retroviruses, which reverse the usual flow of genetic code from DNA to RNA, are capable of that. A retrovirus stores its genetic information in a single-stranded molecule of RNA, instead of the more common double-stranded DNA. When it infects a cell, the virus deploys a special enzyme, called reverse transcriptase, that enables it to copy itself and then paste its own genes into the new cell's DNA. It then becomes part of that cell forever; when the cell divides, the virus goes with it. Scientists have long suspected that if a retrovirus happens to infect a human sperm cell or egg, which is rare, and if that embryo survives—which is rarer still—the retrovirus could take its place in the blueprint of our species, passed from mother to child, and from one generation to the next, much like a gene for eye color or asthma.

When the sequence of the human genome was fully mapped, in 2003, researchers also discovered something they had not anticipated: our bodies are littered with the shards of such retroviruses, fragments of the chemical code from which all genetic material is made. It takes less than two per cent of our genome to create all the proteins necessary for us to live. Eight per cent, however, is composed of broken and disabled retroviruses, which, millions of years ago, managed to embed themselves in the DNA of our ancestors. They are called endogenous retroviruses, because once they infect the DNA of a species they become part of that species. One by one, though, after molecular battles that raged for thousands of generations, they have been defeated by evolution. Like dinosaur bones, these viral fragments are fossils. Instead of having been buried in sand, they reside within each of us, carrying a record that goes back millions of years. Because they no longer seem to serve a purpose or cause harm, these remnants have often been referred to as "junk DNA." Many still manage to generate proteins, but scientists have never found one that functions properly in humans or that could make us sick.

Then, last year, Thierry Heidmann brought one back to life. Combining the tools of genomics, virology, and evolutionary biology, he and his colleagues took a virus that had been extinct for hundreds of thousands of years, figured out how the broken parts were originally aligned, and then pieced them together. After resurrecting the virus, the team placed it in human cells and found that their creation did indeed insert itself into the DNA of those cells. They also mixed the virus with cells taken from hamsters and cats. It quickly infected them all, offering the first evidence that the broken parts could once again be made infectious. The experiment could provide vital clues about how viruses like H.I.V. work. Inevitably, though, it also conjures images of Frankenstein's monster and Jurassic Park.

"If you think about this for five minutes, it is wild stuff," John Coffin told me when I visited him in his laboratory at Tufts University, where he is the American Cancer Society Research Professor. Coffin is one of the country's most distinguished molecular biologists, and was

JOOST SWARTE

Disabled retroviruses—fossils of molecular battles that raged for generations—make up eight per cent of the human genome.

one of the first to explore the role of endogenous retroviruses in human evolution. "I understand that the idea of bringing something dead back to life is fundamentally frightening," he went on. "It's a power that science has come to possess and it makes us queasy, and it should. But there are many viruses that are more dangerous than these—more infectious, far riskier to work with, and less potentially useful."

Thanks to steady advances in computing power and DNA technology, a talented undergraduate with a decent laptop and access to any university biology lab can assemble a virus with ease. Five years ago, as if to prove that point, researchers from the State University of New York at Stony Brook "built" a polio virus, using widely available information and DNA they bought through the mail. To test their "polio recipe," they injected the virus into mice. The animals first became paralyzed and then died. ("The reason we did it was to prove that it can be done," Eckard Wimmer, who led the team, said at the time. "Progress in biomedical research has its benefits and it has its downside.") The effort was widely seen as pointless and the justification absurd. "Proof of principle for bioterrorism," Coffin called it. "Nothing more." Then, two years ago, after researchers had sequenced the genetic code of the 1918 flu virus, federal scientists reconstructed it, too. In that case, there was a well-understood and highly desired goal: to develop a vaccine that might offer protection against future pandemics.

Resurrecting an extinct virus is another matter. Still, if Heidmann had stuck to scientific nomenclature when he published his results, last fall, few outside his profession would have noticed. A paper entitled "Identification of an Infectious Progenitor for the Multiple-Copy HERV-K Human Endogenous Retroelements," which appeared in the journal *Genome Research*, was unlikely to cause a stir. Heidmann is on a bit of a mission, though. He named the virus Phoenix, after the mythical bird that rises from the ashes, because he is convinced that this virus and others like it have much to tell about the origins and the evolution of humanity.

With equal ardor but less fanfare, scientists throughout the world have embarked on similar or related projects. One team, at the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center, in New York, recently created an almost identical virus. In the past few months, groups at Oxford University and at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, in Seattle, have also produced results that provide startling observations about evolution and disease. The approaches often differ, but not the goals. All of these researchers hope that excavating the molecular past will help address the medical complexities that we confront today. Almost incidentally, they have created a new discipline, paleovirology, which seeks to better understand the impact of modern diseases by studying the genetic history of ancient viruses.

"This is something not to fear but to celebrate," Heidmann told me one day as we sat in his office at the institute, which is dedicated to the treatment and eradication of cancer. Through the window, the Eiffel Tower hovered silently over the distant city. "What is remarkable here, and unique, is the fact that endogenous retroviruses are two things at once: genes and viruses. And those viruses helped make us who we are today just as surely as other genes did. I am not certain that we would have survived as a species without them."

He continued, "The Phoenix virus sheds light on how H.I.V. operates, but, more than that, on how *we* operate, and how we evolved. Many people study other aspects of human evolution—how we came to walk, or the meaning of domesticated animals. But I would argue that equally important is the role of pathogens in shaping the way we are today. Look, for instance, at the process of pregnancy and birth." Heidmann and others have suggested that without endogenous retroviruses mammals might never have developed a placenta, which protects the fetus and gives it time to mature. That led to live birth, one of the hallmarks of our evolutionary success over birds, reptiles, and fish. Eggs cannot eliminate waste or draw the maternal nutrients required to develop the large brains that have made mammals so versatile. "These viruses made those changes possible,"

LORCA

The fact that no one had ever seen Lorca run
had only to do with the legend of his clumsiness,
for one foot was shorter than the other and he was
terrified to cross the street by himself,
though dogs barking in the mountains above him
brought him back to his senses and caused him
when he was alone to try leaping and skipping
the way you did and he tried the hop, skip, and jump
he learned from the 1932 Olympics
and loaded the left side of his mouth with green tobacco
when he was only eleven, for he took comfort
in every form of degradation; and it was
in John Jay Hall in 1949
that Geraldo from Pittsburgh made a personal connection,
for they were both housed in Room 1231
twenty years apart not counting the months
and only one of them heard Eisenhower give his maiden speech
outside the courtyard entrance, and there were bitter
oranges enough for them both and you can imagine
one of our poets in the hands of our own bastards,
but what is the use of comparing, only the hats
are different, though I'm not too sure, the roses
maybe they stuffed in our mouths—the Granadas.

—*Gerald Stern*

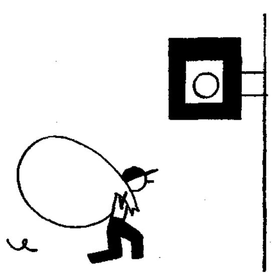
Heidmann told me. "It is quite possible that, without them, human beings would still be laying eggs."

H.I.V., the only retrovirus that most people have heard of, has caused more than twenty-five million deaths and infected at least twice that number of people since the middle of the twentieth century, when it moved from monkey to man. It may be hard to understand how organisms from that same family, and constructed with the same genes, could have played a beneficial, and possibly even essential, role in the health and development of any species. In 1968, Robin Weiss, who is now a professor of viral oncology at University College London, found endogenous retroviruses in the embryos of healthy chickens. When he suggested that they were not only benign but might actually perform a critical function in placental development, molecular biologists laughed. "When I first submitted my results on a novel 'endogenous' envelope, suggesting the existence of an integrated retrovirus in normal embryo cells, the manuscript was roundly rejected," Weiss wrote last year in the journal *Retrovirology*. "One reviewer pronounced that my interpretation was impossible." Weiss, who is responsible for much of the basic knowledge about how the AIDS virus interacts with the human immune system, was not deterred. He was eager to learn whether the chicken retroviruses he had seen were recently acquired infections or inheritances that had been passed down through the centuries. He moved to the Pahang jungle of Malaysia and began living with a group of Orang Asli tribesmen. Red jungle fowl, an ancestor species of chickens, were plentiful there, and the tribe was skilled at trapping them. After collecting and testing both eggs and blood samples, Weiss was able to identify versions of the same viruses. Similar tests were soon carried out on other animals. The discovery helped mark the beginning of a new approach to biology. "If Charles Darwin reappeared today, he might be surprised to learn that humans are descended from viruses as well as from apes," Weiss wrote.

Darwin's surprise almost certainly would be mixed with delight: when he suggested, in "The Descent of Man" (1871), that humans and apes shared a common ancestor, it was a revolutionary idea, and it remains one today. Yet nothing provides more convincing evidence for the "theory" of evolution than the viruses contained within our DNA. Until recently, the earliest available information about the history and the course of human diseases, like smallpox and typhus, came from mummies no more than four thousand years old. Evolution cannot be measured in a time span that short. Endogenous retroviruses provide a trail of molecular bread crumbs leading millions of years into the past.

Darwin's theory makes sense, though, only if humans share most of those viral fragments with relatives like chimpanzees and monkeys. And we do, in thousands of places throughout our genome. If that were a coincidence, humans and chimpanzees would have had to endure an incalculable number of identical viral infections in the course of millions of years, and then, somehow, those infections would have had to end up in exactly the same place within each genome. The rungs of the ladder of human DNA consist of three billion pairs of nucleotides spread across forty-six chromosomes. The sequences of those nucleotides determine how each person differs from another, and from all other living things. The only way that humans, in thousands of seemingly random locations, could possess the exact retroviral DNA found in another species is by inheriting it from a common ancestor.

Molecular biology has made precise knowledge about the nature of that inheritance possible. With extensive databases of genetic sequences, reconstructing ancestral genomes has become common, and retroviruses have been found in the genome of every vertebrate species that has been studied. Anthropologists and biologists have used them to investigate not only the lineage of primates but the relationships among animals—dogs, jackals, wolves, and foxes, for example—and also to test whether similar organisms may in fact be unrelated.

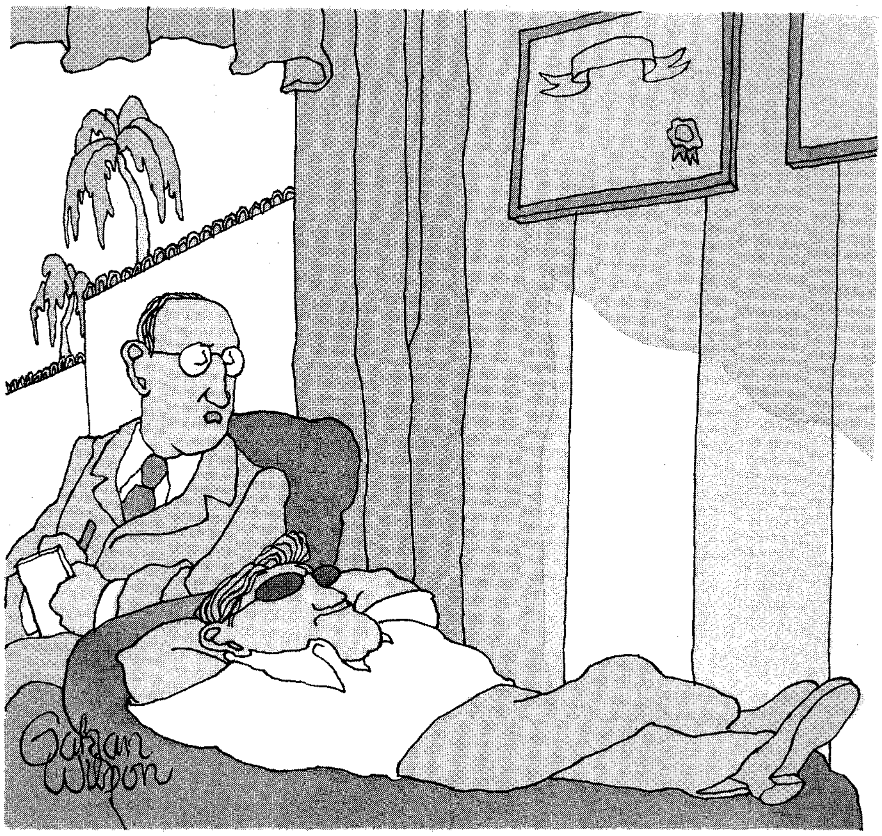


Although it is no longer a daunting technical task to find such viruses, or their genes, figuring out the selective evolutionary pressures that shaped them remains difficult. Partly, that is because the viruses mutate with such speed. H.I.V. can evolve a million times as fast as the human-immune-system cells it infects. (Such constant change makes it hard to develop antiviral drugs that will remain effective for long, and it has also presented a significant obstacle to the development of an AIDS vaccine.)

There are retroviruses (like H.I.V.) that do not infect sperm or egg cells. Because they are not inherited, they leave no trace of their history. "We can have a fossil record only of the viruses that made it into the germ line," Paul Bieniasz told me. "And, of course, most did not." Bieniasz is a professor of retrovirology at the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center and the chief of the retrovirology laboratory at Rockefeller University. He has long been interested in the way complex organisms interact with viruses and adapt to them. "With flu virus, you can watch it change in real time," he said. "You can watch the antibodies develop and see when and how it dies out. But with these others you are looking back tens of millions of years, so it is hard to know how a virus functioned."

While Heidmann was working with the Phoenix virus in France, Bieniasz and two colleagues at Aaron Diamond initiated a similar project. (At first, neither team was aware of the other's work.) Bieniasz rebuilt the youngest extinct retrovirus in the human genome—one that was still active a few hundred thousand years ago—because it had the fewest mutations. The team took ten versions of that virus (we carry more than thirty) and compared the thousands of nucleotides in the genetic sequence of each version. They were almost identical, but where they differed the researchers selected the nucleotides that appeared most frequently. That permitted them to piece together a working replica of the extinct retrovirus. "If you have a person with a lethal defect in the heart," Bieniasz explained, "and another with a lethal defect in the kidney, you could make one healthy person by transplanting the respective organs. That is what we did.

"In the past, you got sick and you keeled over and died," he said. "Or you survived. Nobody could make much



"I'm afraid that's a wrap for this session!"

sense of it. But almost ten per cent of our DNA consists of old retroviruses, and that says to me that it's pretty clear they played a major role in our evolution. We evolved remarkably sophisticated defenses against them, and we would have done that only if their impact on human populations had been quite severe. It's very likely that we have been under threat from retroviruses many times throughout human history. It is eminently possible that this is not the first time we have been colonized by a virus very much like H.I.V."

At the end of the nineteenth century, a mysterious series of cancer epidemics devastated American poultry farms. One bird would fall ill and the entire flock would soon be dead. In 1909, a desperate farmer from Long Island brought a chicken with a tumor to the laboratory of Peyton Rous, a young cancer researcher at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, in New York City (which became Rockefeller University). Cancer was not supposed to spread by virus, but the bird clearly had cancer. Rous, who as a young man worked on a Texas cattle ranch, was mystified. He extracted cancer cells from the sick bird, chopped them up, and injected the filtered remains into healthy chickens: they all developed tumors. A virus had to be the cause, but for years no one could figure out how the virus functioned.

Then, in the nineteen-sixties, Howard Temin, a virologist at the University of Wisconsin, began to question the "central dogma" of molecular biology, which stated that genetic instructions moved in a single direction, from the basic blueprints contained within our DNA to RNA, which translates those blueprints and uses them to build proteins. He suggested that the process could essentially run in the other direction: an RNA tumor virus could give rise to a DNA copy, which would then insert itself into the genetic material of a cell. Temin's theory was dismissed, like most fundamental departures from conventional wisdom. But he never wavered. Finally, in 1970, he and David Baltimore, who was working in a separate lab, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, simultaneously discovered reverse transcriptase, the special enzyme that can do exactly what Temin predicted: make DNA from RNA.

The discovery has had a profound impact on modern medicine. It not only explained how cancer can be caused by a virus but provided researchers with the tools they needed to understand the origins and natural progression of diseases like AIDS. It also created a new field, retrovirology, and, more than that, as the Nobel committee noted when it awarded the 1975 Prize in Medicine to both Baltimore and Temin, it began to erase the tenuous borders between viruses and genes.

Retroviruses cause cancers in chickens, sheep, mice, and other animals, but their effect on humans became clear only in the late nineteen-seventies, with the identification of two viruses that cause forms of leukemia. Retroviral proteins are particularly abundant in certain kinds of tumor cells, and scientists wondered to what degree they might be a cause of cancer. They were also curious about how retroviruses that infect us today differ from their ancestors. Working with mice in 2005, Thierry Heidmann found that endogenous retroviruses were present in large quantities in tumor cells. Similar viruses have been associated with many cancers (and other diseases). It is still not clear how they function, but they may help subvert the immune system, which would permit cancer cells to grow without restraint. Endogenous retroviruses also may actually protect us from viruses that are even worse. Experiments with mice and chickens have shown that they can block new infections by viruses with a similar genetic structure. Nonetheless, endogenous retroviruses are parasites, and in most cases the cells they infect would be better off without them. There is, however, one notable exception.

The earliest mammals, ancestors of the spiny anteater and the duck-billed platypus, laid eggs. Then, at least a hundred million years ago, embryos, instead of growing in a shell, essentially became parasites. While only balls of cells, they began to implant themselves in the lining of the womb. The result was the placenta, which permits the embyros to take nourishment from the mother's blood, while preventing immune cells or bacteria from entering. The placenta is essentially a modified egg. In the early nineteen-seventies, biologists who were scanning baboon placentas with an electron microscope were surprised to see retroviruses on a layer of tissue known as the syncytium, which forms the principal barrier between mother and fetus. They were even more surprised to see that all the animals were healthy. The same phenomenon was soon observed in mice, cats, guinea pigs, and humans. For many years, however, embryologists were not quite sure what to make of these placental discoveries. Most remained focussed on the potential harm a retrovirus could cause, rather than on any possible benefit. Cell fusion is a fundamental characteristic of the mammalian placenta but also, it turns out, of endogenous retroviruses. In fact, the protein syncytin, which causes placental cells to fuse together, employs the exact mechanism that enables retroviruses to latch on to the cells they infect.

The Nobel Prize-winning biologist Joshua Lederberg once wrote that the "single biggest threat to man's continued dominance on this planet is the virus." Harmit Malik, an evolutionary geneticist at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, acknowledges the threat, yet he is confident that viruses may also provide one of our greatest scientific opportunities. Exploring that fundamental paradox—that our most talented parasites may also make us stronger—has become Malik's passion. "We have been in an evolutionary arms race with viruses for at least one hundred million years," he told me recently, when I visited his laboratory. "There is genetic conflict everywhere. You see it in processes that you would never suspect; in cell division, for instance, and in the production of proteins involved in the very essence of maintaining life.

"One party is winning and the other losing all the time," Malik went on. "That's evolution. It's the world's definitive game of cat and mouse. Viruses evolve, the host adapts, proteins change, viruses evade them. It never ends." The AIDS virus, for example, has one gene, called "vif," that does nothing but block a protein whose sole job is to stop the virus from making copies of itself. It simply takes that protein into the cellular equivalent of a trash can; if not for that gene, H.I.V. might have been a trivial disease. "To even think about the many million-year processes that caused that sort of evolution," Malik said, shaking his head in wonder. "It's dazzling."

Malik grew up in Bombay and studied chemical engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology there, one of the most prestigious technical institutions in a country obsessed with producing engineers. He gave no real thought to biology, but he was wholly uninspired by his other studies. "It was fair to say I had little interest in chemical engineering, and I happened to tell that to my faculty adviser," he recalled. "He asked me what I liked. Well, I was reading Richard Dawkins at the time, his book 'The Selfish Gene' "—which asserts that a gene will operate in its own interest even if that means destroying an organism that it inhabits or helped create. The concept fascinated Malik. "I was thinking of becoming a philosopher," he said. "I thought I would study selfishness."

Malik's adviser had another idea. The university had just established a department of molecular biology, and Malik was dispatched to speak with its director. "This guy ended up teaching me by himself, sitting across the table. We met three times a week. I soon realized that he was testing out his course on me. I liked it and decided to apply to graduate school—although I had less than a tenth of the required biology courses. I had very little hope." But he had excellent test scores and in 1993 was accepted at the University of Rochester, as a graduate student in the biology department. He visited his new adviser as soon as he arrived. "He looked at my schedule and said, 'I see that you are doing genetics.' I had no clue what he was talking about, but I said sure, that sounds good. I had never taken a course in the subject. He gave me the textbook and told me that the class was for undergraduates, which made me feel more comfortable." It wasn't until the end of the conversation that Malik realized he would be teaching the class, not taking it.

The Hutchinson Center encourages its research scientists to collaborate with colleagues in seemingly unrelated fields. Malik and Michael Emerman, a virologist at the center's Human Biology and Basic Sciences Divisions, have been working together for four years. Malik's principal interest is historical: why did evolutionary pressures shape our defenses against viruses, and how have they done it? Emerman studies the genetic composition and molecular pathology of the AIDS virus. "Together, we are trying to understand what constellation of

"These maps are old, so pay no attention to the borders."

viruses we are susceptible to and why," Emerman told me. "We know at least that it is all a consequence of infections our ancestors had. So from there we want to try and derive a modern repertoire of antiviral genes."

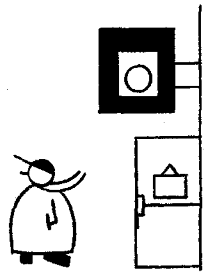
They focussed on chimpanzees, our closest relatives. Chimpanzees are easily infected by the AIDS virus, but it never makes them sick. That has remained one of the most frustrating mysteries of the epidemic. How did nearly identical genetic relatives become immune to a virus that attacks us with such vigor? The most dramatic difference between the chimp genome and ours is that chimps have roughly a hundred and thirty copies of a virus called *Pan troglodytes* endogenous retrovirus, which scientists refer to by the acronym PtERV (pronounced "pea-terv"). Gorillas have eighty copies. Humans have none.

"We can see that PtERV infected gorillas and chimps four million years ago," Emerman told me. "But there was never any trace of its infecting humans." It is possible that all infected humans died, but it is far more likely that we developed a way to repel the virus. Nobody knew why until Emerman, Malik, and Shari Kaiser, a graduate student in Emerman's lab, presented evidence for a startling theory: the evolutionary process that protects us from PtERV may be the central reason we are vulnerable to H.I.V.

"We thought we must have a defense against this thing that they don't have," Malik told me, picking up the story the following day. Evolutionary biologists are not given to emotional outbursts—by definition, they take the long view. Malik is an engaging and voluble exception. When an antiviral protein excites him, he doesn't hold back. "Where but in evolutionary history can you see a story like this, with PtERV and the chimps?" he asked, leaping up from his chair to begin sketching viral particles on a whiteboard. "It's simply amazing."

He launched into a description of the complex interactions between viruses and the proteins that we have developed to fight them. There is one particular gene, called TRIM5α, that in humans manufactures a protein that binds to and destroys PtERV. "Our version of this gene is highly effective against PtERV, which is why we don't get infected," he said. Every primate has some version, but it works differently in each species—customized to fit the varying evolutionary requirements of each. In the rhesus monkey, that single gene provides complete protection against H.I.V. infection. In humans, it does nothing of the kind. "When Michael and I started to get into this business, people had never thought much about the evolutionary meaning of that gene. But we wondered, Is TRIM5α just an anti-H.I.V. factor or is there something else going on here?"

Like the two human retroviruses that were reconstructed in France and in New York, PtERV has long been extinct; Emerman and Malik realized that they would have to assemble a new version if they hoped to learn how we became immune to it. They took scores of viral sequences and lined them up to see what they had in common. The answer was almost everything. When there were differences in the sequence, the researchers used a statistical model to predict the most likely original version. Then they put the virus back together. (Like Bieniasz, in New York, they did so in such a way that the virus could reproduce only once.) They modified the human TRIM5α protein so that it would function like the chimp version. After that, the protein no longer protected humans against the reconstructed copy of the virus. Next, they tested this modified version against H.I.V. Emerman placed it in a dish, first with H.I.V. and next with PtERV. What he found astonished him. No matter how many times he repeated the test, the results never varied. "In every case, the protein blocked either PtERV or H.I.V.," Emerman told me. "But it never protected the cells from both viruses."



There are several possible ways to interpret the data, but the one favored by the researchers is that *because* humans developed an effective defense against one virus, PtERV, at about the time we split off from the chimps, five million years ago, we were left vulnerable to a new one, H.I.V. "If we can develop a drug that acts the same way the monkey version of this protein acts—so that it recognizes H.I.V. and neutralizes it—we could have a very effective therapy," Malik said. Both he and Emerman stressed that this day will not come soon. "First, we have to establish what part of TRIM5α is actually responsible for protecting monkeys against H.I.V.," Malik said. "Then we would have to try and make it as a drug"—and one that the human body won't reject. "The challenge is to find out how little you can change the human version and still make it effective against H.I.V. That is really what drives this whole story of re-creating that extinct virus and doing these experiments. Nobody is doing this as a gimmick. This virus could open doors that have been closed to us for millions of years. And if we can learn how to do that we have a chance to find a very effective response to one of the world's most incredibly effective viruses."

The Oxford University zoology department is housed in a forbidding concrete structure that looks like an Eastern European police station. The building is named for the Dutch ethologist Niko Tinbergen, whose work—with wasps and gulls, among other species—won him a Nobel Prize and helped establish the study of animal behavior as a science. Tinbergen's most famous student, Richard Dawkins, has carried on the university tradition of aggressive independence, and so have the younger members of the faculty. I stopped by the department a few months ago to have lunch with two of them, Aris Katzourakis and Robert Belshaw, both evolutionary biologists who have made the new field of paleovirology a specialty. Just before I arrived, Katzourakis had lobbed a bomb into the field.

Nobody knows what chain of evolutionary factors is required to transform an infectious virus—like H.I.V.—into one that is inherited. Such a virus would have to invade reproductive cells. H.I.V. doesn't do that. It belongs to a class called lentiviruses (from the Latin for "slow"), which are common in mammals like sheep and goats. Because lentiviruses had never been found in any animal's genome, most virologists assumed that they evolved recently. Until this summer, the oldest known lentivirus was "only" a million years, and almost no one thought that a lentivirus could become endogenous.

In a paper titled "Discovery and

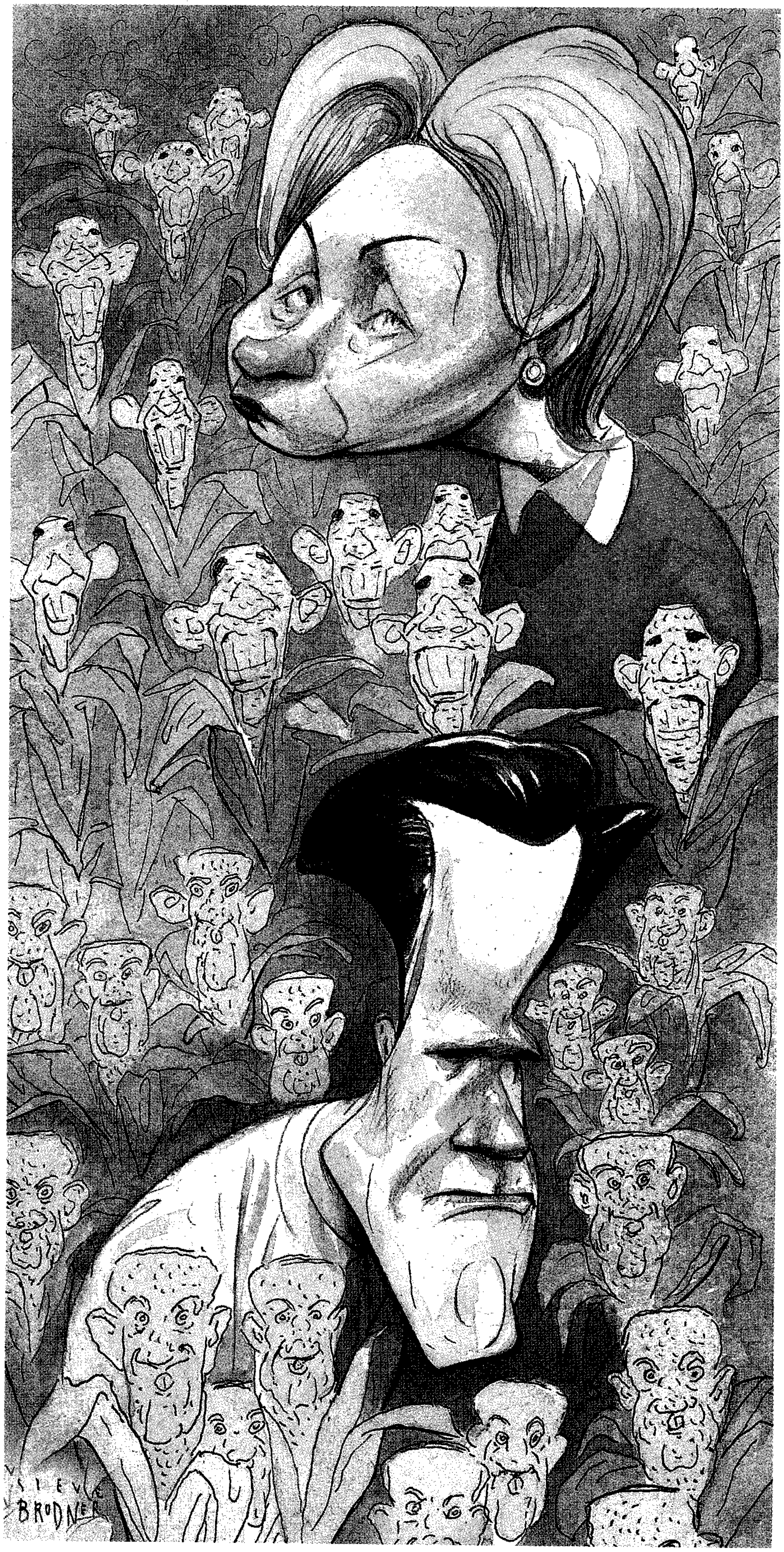
Analysis of the First Endogenous Lentivirus," published last spring in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Katzourakis, along with collaborators from Oxford, Stanford University, and Imperial College London, showed otherwise. They discovered the fossilized remains of an ancient lentivirus—the same type that causes AIDS—within the genome of the European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*). "At first, I just assumed it was a mistake," Katzourakis told me over lunch in the building's cafeteria, Darwin's Café. "We checked it twice, three times. But we kept seeing genes that are found only in lentiviruses." They named their discovery "rabbit endogenous lentivirus type K," or RELIK. An obvious next step for Katzourakis and his group will be to work with virologists who can assemble a functional version of the ancient virus—as the researchers in Paris, New York, and Seattle have done. "It's the most promising way to explore the evolution and the impact of H.I.V.," he said.

It might be more than that. AIDS researchers have always been handicapped by the absence of a small-animal model in which to study the effects of the disease. It is not easy to use monkeys or sheep. They are expensive and difficult to obtain, and, for reasons of ethics, many experiments on them are proscribed. "Although RELIK is an ancient lentivirus and only defective copies were identified in this analysis," the authors wrote, "recent research has shown that it is possible to reconstruct infectious progenitors of such viruses," which, they concluded, could potentially "provide a small animal model for experimental research."

The discovery has already changed the way scientists think about viral evolution, and about H.I.V. in particular. "The most obvious implication is that we can no longer say that H.I.V. could not become endogenous," John Coffin, of Tufts, told me, though he still considers that unlikely. "It opens the field to a whole new level of examination." It also considerably alters the phylogenetic tree. RELIK is at least seven million years old, which makes it the oldest known lentivirus. "It is possible that primate lentiviruses such as H.I.V. and S.I.V."—its simian cousin—"are much older than people ever thought," Coffin said.

We can't be certain when endoge-

Iowa Snapshot



Hillary Clinton and Mitt Romney, who hope for a rich harvest in Iowa, find themselves in the tall corn with Barack Obama and Mike Huckabee.

STEVE BRODNER

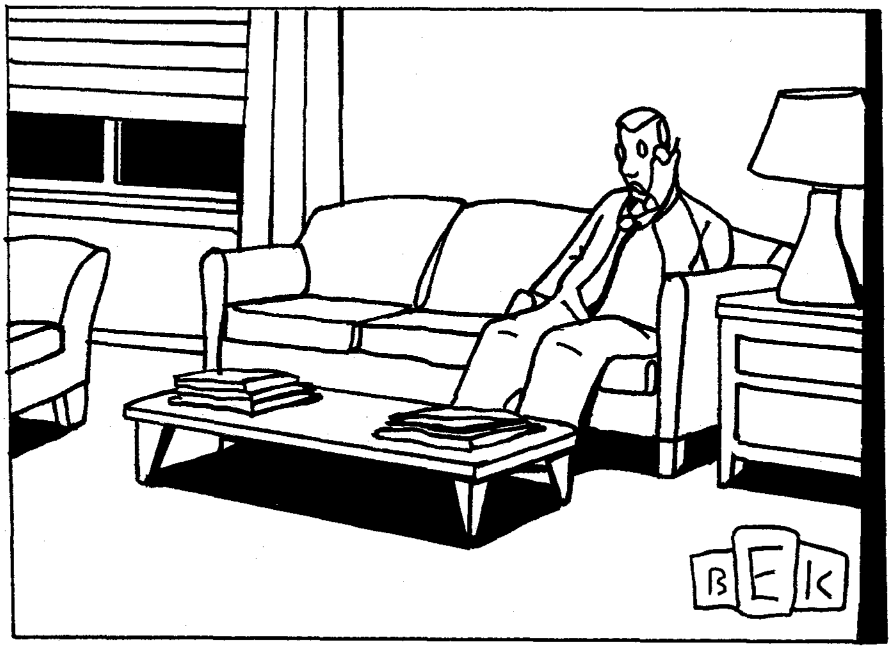
nous retroviruses entered our genome, because it is impossible to watch a five-million-year process unfold. Yet in Australia a retrovirus seems to be evolving in front of our eyes. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, koalas on the mainland were hunted nearly to extinction. To protect them, as many as possible were captured and moved to several islands in the south. In the past hundred years, those koalas have been used to replenish the population on the mainland and on several other Australian islands. In many cases, though, they have become infected with a retrovirus that causes leukemia, immune disorders, and other diseases. It can even kill them. The epidemic presents a significant threat to the future of the species, and scientists have followed it closely. One group, from the University of Queensland, looked for the virus in koala DNA—and, as one would expect with a retrovirus, found it. The team also noticed that some of the babies, known as joeys, were infected in the same locations on their DNA as their parents. That means that the virus has become endogenous. Yet, when the scientists examined the koalas on Kangaroo Island, in the south, they discovered something they had not anticipated: none of the koalas were infected.

That could mean only one thing: since the infected animals had all been moved just in the past century, the koala retrovirus must have spread to Australia recently and is entering the genome now. That offers virologists and evolutionary biologists their first opportunity to learn how a virus transforms itself from something that can simply infect (and kill) its host to an organism that will become a permanent part of that host. Persistent viruses tend to grow weaker over the years. They couldn't live for long if they killed everything they infected. How they adapt, though, is a mystery. "Events like this have obviously occurred in human evolution," Paul Bieniasz told me—even with viruses like H.I.V. "We might be able to see how the koala infection settles into the genome, and whether it plays a role in helping its host fend off other viruses," he continued. "Whatever we learn will be useful, because we could never have learned it in any other way."

In 1963, Linus Pauling, the twentieth century's most influential chemist, wrote an essay, with Emile Zuckerkandl, in which they predicted that it would one day become possible to reconstruct extinct forms of life. It has taken half a century for scientists to acquire the information necessary to master most of the essential molecular biology and genetics, but there can no longer be any doubt that Pauling was right. Once you are able to assemble the ancestral sequence of any form of life, all you have to do is put the genes together, and back it comes.

"The knowledge you gain from resurrecting something that has not been alive for a million years has to be immensely valuable," Harmit Malik told me in Seattle. "We didn't take it lightly, and I don't think any of our colleagues did, either." He repeatedly pointed out that each virus was assembled in such a way that it could reproduce only once. "If you can't apply the knowledge, you shouldn't do the experiment," he said. Malik is a basic research scientist. His work is not directly related to drug development or treating disease. Still, he thinks deeply about the link between what he does and the benefits such work might produce. That is an entirely new way to look at the purpose of scientific research, which in the past was always propelled by intellectual curiosity, not utilitarian goals. Among élite scientists, it was usually considered gauche to be obsessed with anything so tangible or immediate; brilliant discoveries were supposed to percolate. But that paradigm was constructed before laboratories around the world got into the business of reshaping, resurrecting, and creating various forms of life.

The insights provided by recent advances in evolutionary biology have already been put to use, particularly in efforts to stop the AIDS virus. One of the main reasons that endogenous retroviruses can enter our genome without killing us is that they make many errors when they reproduce. Those errors are genetic mutations. The faster a cell reproduces (and the older it is), the more errors it is likely to make. And the more errors it makes the less likely it is to be dangerous to its host. "Viruses are accumulating and becoming more decrepit with every passing million years" was the way Malik described it to me. That realization has led AIDS researchers to contemplate a novel kind of drug. Until recently, antiviral medications had been designed largely to prevent H.I.V. from reproducing. Various drugs try to interfere with enzymes and other proteins that are essential for the virus to copy itself. There is a problem with this approach, however. Because the virus changes so rapidly, after a while a drug designed to stop it can lose its effectiveness completely. (That is why people



"Making a difference doesn't make a difference."

take cocktails of H.I.V. medications; the combinations help slow the rate at which the virus learns to evade those interventions.)

"We ask only that you be discreet around the celebrities."

Scientists at a company called Koronis Pharmaceuticals, just outside Seattle, are taking the opposite approach. They hope that by speeding up the life cycle of the AIDS virus they can drive it to extinction. The goal is to accelerate the virus's already rapid pace of mutation to the point where it produces such an enormous number of errors in its genome that it ceases to pose a threat. Like endogenous retroviruses, H.I.V. would become extinct. Earlier this month, researchers at the University of California at San Francisco and at the University of Toronto announced an even more fascinating way to use the fossils in our genome. H.I.V. infects immune-system cells and alters them so that they can produce more H.I.V. In doing so, they stimulate endogenous retroviruses, which then produce proteins that act as a sort of distress signal. Those signals can be detected on the surface of H.I.V.-infected cells, and in theory it should be possible to develop vaccines that target them. In essence, such a vaccine would act like a smart bomb, homing in on a signal transmitted from within each H.I.V.-infected cell. The team in San Francisco found strong evidence of those signals in the immune cells of fifteen of sixteen volunteers who were infected with H.I.V. In an uninfected control group, the signals were far weaker or were absent altogether. "For a vaccine against an infectious agent, this is a completely new strategy," Douglas Nixon, the immunologist who led the team, said. It's one that could not have emerged without the recent knowledge gained through experiments with endogenous retroviruses.

There may be no biological process more complicated than the relationships that viruses have with their hosts. Could it be that their persistence made it possible for humans to thrive? Luis P. Villarreal has posed that question many times, most notably in a 2004 essay, "Can Viruses Make Us Human?" Villarreal is the director of the Center for Virus Research at the University of California at Irvine. "This question will seem preposterous to most," his essay begins. "Viruses are molecular genetic parasites and are mostly recognized for their ability to induce disease." Yet he goes on to argue that they also represent "a major creative force" in our evolution, driving each infected cell to acquire new and increasingly complex molecular identities. Villarreal was among the first to propose that endogenous retroviruses played a crucial role in the development of the mammalian placenta. He goes further than that, though: "Clearly, we have been observing evolution only for a very short time. Yet we can witness what current viruses," such as H.I.V., "can and might do to the human population."

Villarreal predicts that, without an effective AIDS vaccine, nearly the entire population of Africa will eventually perish. "We can also expect at least a few humans to survive," he wrote. They would be people who have been infected with H.I.V. yet, for some reason, do not get sick. "These survivors would thus be left to repopulate the continent. However, the resulting human population would be distinct" from those whom H.I.V. makes sick. These people would have acquired some combination of genes that confers resistance to H.I.V. There are already examples of specific mutations that seem to protect people against the virus. (For H.I.V. to infect immune cells, for example, it must normally dock with a receptor that sits on the surface of those cells. There are people, though, whose genes instruct them to build defective receptors. Those with two copies of that defect, one from each parent, are resistant to H.I.V. infection no matter how often they are exposed to the virus.) The process might take tens, or even hundreds, of thousands of years, but Darwinian selection would ultimately favor such mutations, and provide the opportunity for the evolution of a fitter human population. "If this were to be the outcome," Villarreal wrote, "we would see a new species of human, marked by its newly acquired endogenous viruses." The difference between us and this new species would be much like the difference that we know exists between humans and chimpanzees.

For Villarreal, and a growing number of like-minded scientists, the conclusion is clear. "Viruses may well be the unseen creator that most likely did contribute to making us human." ♦

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An audio interview with Michael Specter.

CHRONICLES

THE BOOK OF EXODUS

A double rescue in wartime Sarajevo.

BY GERALDINE BROOKS

When the Axis powers conquered and divided Yugoslavia, in the spring of 1941, Sarajevo did not fare well. The city cradled by mountains that Rebecca West once described as like "an opening flower" suddenly found itself absorbed into the Nazi puppet state of Croatia, its tolerant, cosmopolitan culture crushed by the invading German Army and the Croatian Fascist Ustashe. Hitler's ally, Ante Pavelic, who had headed the Ustashe through the nineteen-thirties, proclaimed that his new state must be "cleansed" of Jews and Serbs: "Not a stone upon a stone will remain of what once belonged to them."

The terror began on April 16th, when the German Army entered Sarajevo and sacked the city's eight synagogues. The Sarajevo *pinkas*, a complete record of the Jewish community from its earliest days, was confiscated and sent to Prague, never to be recovered. Deportations followed. Jews, Gypsies, and Serb resisters turned frantically to sympathetic Muslim or Croat neighbors to hide them. Fear of denunciation spread through the city, penetrating every workplace, even the imposing neo-Renaissance halls of the Bosnian National Museum.

The museum's chief librarian, an Islamic scholar named Dervis Korkut, was an unlikely figure of resistance, but he had already made his anti-Fascist feelings clear, in an article defending the city's beleaguered Jews. A handsome, dapper man with a neatly trimmed mustache, he wore well-tailored three-piece suits complemented by a fez. In early 1942, when Korkut heard that a Nazi commander, General Johann Fortner, had arrived at the museum to speak to its director, he immediately feared for the museum library's greatest treasure, a masterpiece of medieval Judaica known as the Sarajevo Haggadah. A Haggadah, from the Hebrew root "HGD"—"to tell"—relates the story of the exodus from Egypt, which Jews are commanded to tell to their children. It is used at the table during the Passover Seder. (Wine stains on the parchments of the Sarajevo Haggadah testify that this book, though lavishly designed, was read at such family feasts.)

There were rumors, at the time, of Hitler's nascent plan for a "museum of an extinct race." Synagogues and community buildings in Josevof, the Jewish quarter of Prague, had been spared destruction so that, when all of Europe's Jews had been obliterated, it could become a caricature "Jew Town" for Aryan tourists to visit, populated by Czech actors in Hasidic garb. The museum's future exhibits would eventually fill fifty warehouses. The best of Europe's Judaica was being amassed as part of the general plunder under the authority of Alfred Rosenberg, the Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories. Rosenberg's collection was intended to facilitate a new branch of scholarship: *Judenforschung ohne Juden* (Jewish studies without Jews). Hitler admired Rosenberg's impeccable Fascist aesthetics (Rosenberg had decried Expressionism as "syphilitic") and in 1940 had directed the Wehrmacht to extend all possible assistance to his unit. By the war's end, the Germans had looted more than thirty thousand items of Judaica—silk Torah mantles, prayer shawls, silver ritual cups and dishes, and portraits, kitchenware, and other domestic items that reflected centuries of Jewish life. And there were more than a hundred thousand Yiddish and Hebrew books. The Sarajevo Haggadah could easily have been one of them.

Korkut probably hadn't heard of Hitler's museum, but he had seen ancient Torah scrolls destroyed in Sarajevo's streets. When the museum's director, a respected Croatian archeologist who did not speak German, called for Korkut to act as a translator, a few minutes before his meeting with Fortner, Korkut pleaded to be allowed to take the Haggadah and keep it out of Nazi hands. The director was reluctant. "You will be risking your life," he warned. Korkut replied that the book was his responsibility as *kustos*—custodian of the library's two hundred thousand volumes. So the two men hurried to the basement, where the Haggadah was kept in a safe whose combination only the director knew. He took the book from a protective box and handed it to Korkut. Korkut lifted his coat and tucked the small codex, which measured about six by nine inches, into the waistband of his trousers. He smoothed his jacket, making sure that no bulges broke the line of his suit, and the two men made their way back upstairs to face the General.

The man so determined to protect a Jewish book was the scion of a prosperous, highly regarded family of Muslim *alims*, or intellectuals, famous for producing judges of Islamic law. Dervis's brother, Besim, a professor of Arabic, made the first good translation of the Koran into Serbo-Croatian. Dervis, born in the old Ottoman capital of Bosnia, Travnik, in 1888, aspired to be a doctor, but his father insisted that he continue the family tradition of religious scholarship. He studied theology at Istanbul University and Near Eastern languages at the Sorbonne. He spoke at least ten languages and served for a time as the senior official in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia's ministry of religious affairs and as an honorary consul for France.

His interests were wide-ranging. He wrote papers on history and architecture, and a tract against alcohol abuse. But his abiding interest was the culture of Bosnia's minority communities, including Albanians and Jews. In 1941, after

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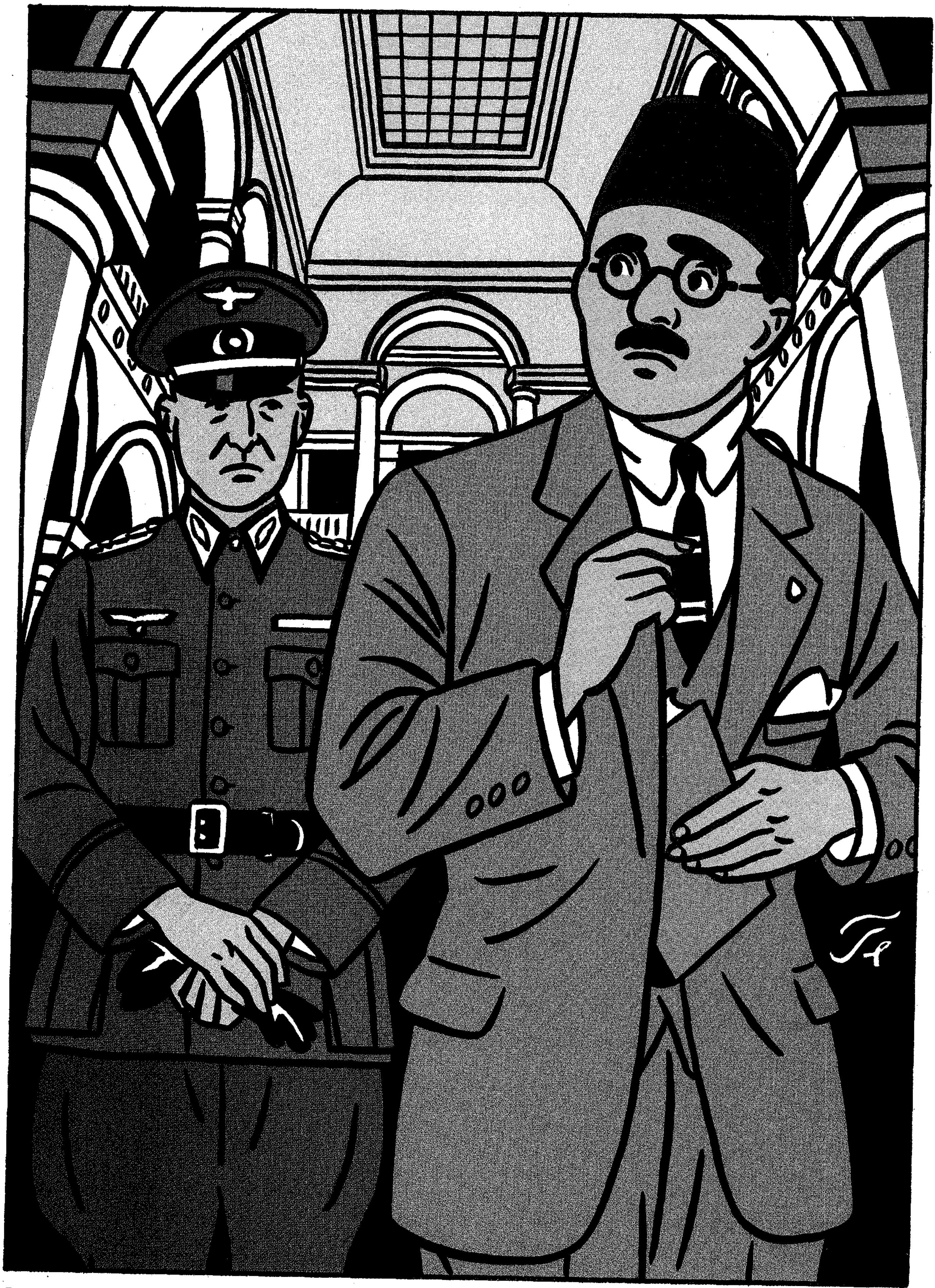
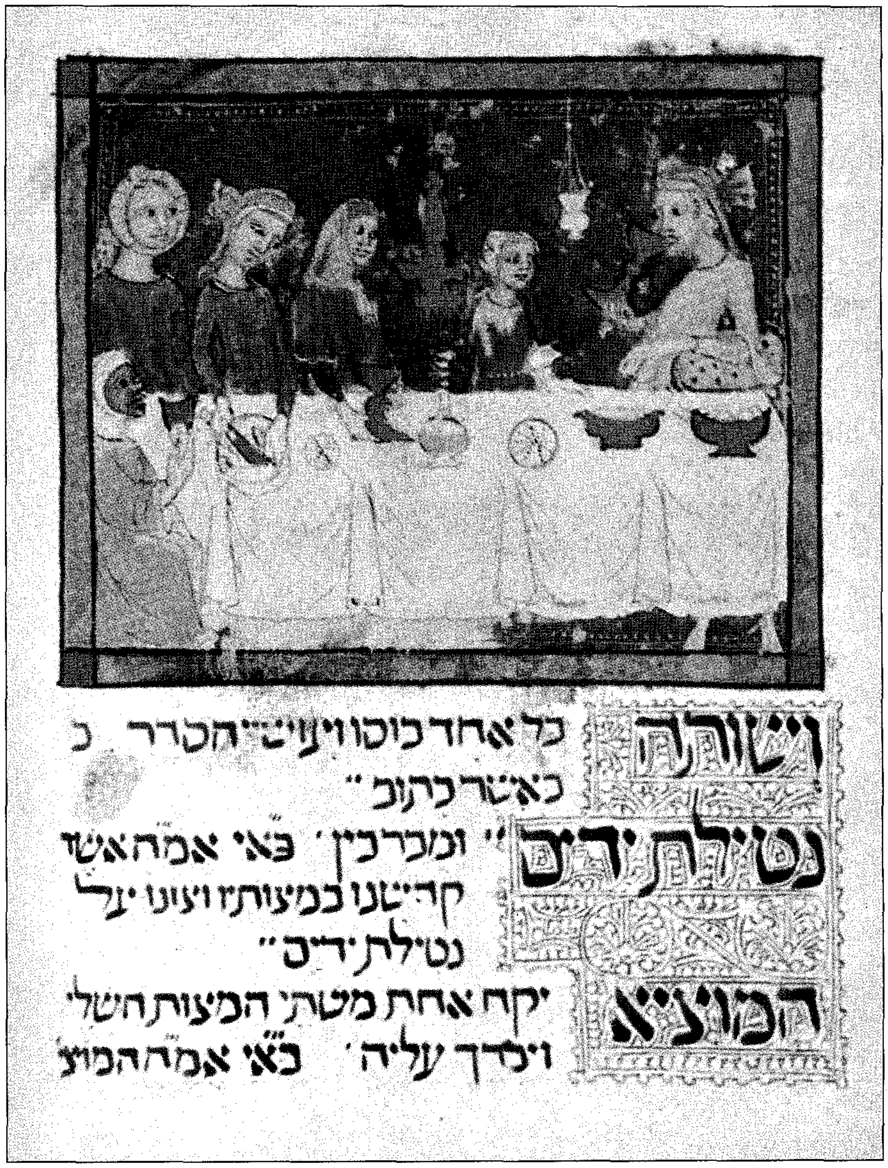


In 1942, a Nazi officer tried to take the Bosnian National Museum's great treasure, the richly illuminated Sarajevo Haggadah.

Yugoslavia tried to appease the Nazis by passing anti-Jewish laws, Korkut wrote a paper titled "Anti-Semitism Is Foreign to the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina," in which he explored the benign history of Bosnia's intercommunal relations and pointed out that the Jews, rather than being the predatory financial manipulators of propaganda, were more likely to be found in the Bosnian underclass.

As a prominent Muslim intellectual, Korkut had come under intense pressure to join a Fascist-leaning group known as the Young Muslims, which served as a kind of proving ground for the Handjar, a Muslim division of the S.S. He refused. Later in the war, he also refused an order signed by Ante Pavelic, requiring him to relocate to "the Croatian People's Liberated Zagreb" to take charge of the library under the Ustashe government's control.

Korkut's passionate interest in Bosnia's cultural diversity manifested itself in his studies of the region's art and literature. He was fascinated by the myriad influences in Sarajevan writing—how a lyric poem composed by a Slav might use classical Arabic and yet echo Latin verse forms carried to Sarajevo from the court of Diocletian on the Dalmatian coast. Of all the treasures in his care, none embodied the possibilities of diversity—or the fragility of intercultural harmony—as exuberantly as the Sarajevo Haggadah. The little parchment codex, rich in gold and silver leaf, lavishly illuminated with precious pigments made from lapis lazuli, azurite, and malachite, was created in Spain, perhaps as early as the mid-fourteenth century, during the period known as the *convivencia*, when Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities lived in the *sol y sombra*—sun and shadow—of a shared existence. The illustrations resemble those of medieval Christian Psalters, but some of the decoration calls to mind an Islamic style of ornamentation. Quite apart from the opulence and artistry of the illustrations, the fact that they exist at all is extraordinary. Until the codex came to light, in 1894, art historians widely believed that figurative painting had been entirely suppressed among medieval Jews because of the injunction in the Ten Commandments, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or likeness of any thing"—a proscription echoed in many Islamic, and some Christian, societies. The content of the illustrations is often intriguing. In a scene that has mystified scholars, a depiction of a Spanish Seder includes a woman whose black skin and African features are in stark contrast to those of other family members around the table but who holds a piece of matzo—unleavened bread—and wears the costume of a wealthy Spanish Jew of the era.



The Sarajevo Haggadah shows a woman with African features at a Passover Seder.

The book's survival is remarkable. In 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella issued the Alhambra Decree expelling all Jews from Spain. If, as seems likely, the book left Spain with a Jewish family at that time, it was one of very few religious texts of its kind to escape confiscation and destruction. In Portugal, where many Spanish Jews found a brief refuge before being expelled a second time, ownership of Hebrew books became a capital offense. One man's account, from Lisbon in 1497, tells how he "dug a grave among the roots of a blossoming olive tree" to hide his books, knowing that it was unlikely he would ever return to unearth them: "Yet, although a tree flourishing with lovely fruit stood there . . . did I call it 'Tree of Sorrow.'"

Sometime in the following century, the Haggadah found its way to Venice, where a polyglot Jewish community thrived on a tiny island that had previously served as the city's foundry, or *ghetto*. The first Jews, German loan bankers among them, had arrived in the early sixteenth century. Next came

Levantine Jews, whose ties to the Ottoman Empire were valuable to the city's vast trading enterprise. The exiles from the Iberian Peninsula gradually increased the population, and the ghetto's tight-pressed multistory dwellings became the tallest in the city. Venice offered Jews property rights and legal protection rarely matched elsewhere in Europe at that time. Still, they had to wear a colored cap to identify themselves when they left the ghetto, and the ghetto's gates were locked each night. They were banned from most trades, including printing, and any Hebrew books that were not approved by an ecclesiastical censor of the Pope's Inquisition were destroyed in public burnings. Books could be destroyed or defaced for many perceived heresies—such as suggestions that the Messiah was yet to come, or arguments against the use of saints or any other intercessors as mediators between humans and an indivisible God, or any reference to Jews as "holy" or "pious." A Catholic priest, Giovanni Domenico Vistorini, inspected the Haggadah in 1609. Nothing is known of him beyond the books that bear his signature, but many of the Catholic Hebraists of the time were converted Jews. Vistorini apparently found nothing objectionable in the Haggadah. His Latin inscription, *Revisto per mi* ("Surveyed by me") runs with a casual fluidity beneath the last, painstakingly calligraphed lines of the Hebrew text.

How or when the book left Venice and came to Sarajevo is a mystery. It was acquired by the museum in 1894, when an indigent Jewish family named Kohen offered it for sale. Because Bosnia was then occupied by Austria-Hungary, the Haggadah was sent for evaluation to the empire's capital, Vienna, where it was immediately hailed as a masterpiece, and then damaged by an inept conservator who cropped the parchments and bungled the rebinding. No one knows what the original covers of the Haggadah were like, but most books with such liberal use of gold leaf and expensive pigments also had elaborate bindings—hand-tooled kid, embossed silver, or mother-of-pearl inlay. The Viennese conservator discarded whatever binding was on the book in 1894 and replaced it with cheap boards covered in an inappropriate Turkish floral design.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

This was the book hidden under Dervis Korkut's coat in 1942, as he translated for General Fortner. Fortner was greatly feared in Sarajevo: in addition to commanding his own Army division, he oversaw a Croatian Fascist regiment known as the Black Legion. Reputedly the most vicious of the Nazi allies, the Black Legion engaged in massacres of Serbs and Jews; it also tortured and killed those suspected of sympathizing with the partisan Resistance. (After the war, Fortner was tried for these crimes by a Yugoslav court. He was hanged in Belgrade in 1947.)

In the museum director's office, after a few minutes of small talk, which Korkut translated with what charm he could muster, Fortner got to the point: "And now, please, give me the Haggadah."

The museum director feigned dismay. "But, General, one of your officers came here already and demanded the Haggadah," he said. "Of course, I gave it to him."

Korkut translated.

"What officer?" Fortner barked. "Name the man!"

The reply was deft: "Sir, I did not think it was my place to require a name."

In scholarly articles about the Sarajevo Haggadah, there are conflicting accounts of what happened next. Some say Korkut hid the small volume within the library, simply misshelving it among the large collection of venerable tomes. The most dramatic version of the story has him climbing out a window and sliding down a drainpipe to take the book into hiding. To reconcile the accounts, I sought out Halima Korkut, the wife of Dervis's nephew. Halima, who works in Arlington, Virginia, teaching Bosnian to State Department officials preparing for foreign postings, is immensely proud of her husband's uncle. She remembers him as "a walking encyclopedia, full of marvellous stories and information about everything." We sat at a large table in an unused classroom as she spread out the various photographs and documents that she had assembled. There were two small books in Serbo-Croatian that she wanted to show me, one of which Dervis had written, on the history and architecture of his birthplace, Travnik. The other was an admiring memoir, written by a former colleague and published in 1974. There were blurred photocopies of old photographs, showing Korkut family members in elaborate Ottoman costume, and a family tree tracing Dervis's lineage to Korkut Beg, a Turk who had arrived in Herzegovina in the sixteenth century. In the midst of translating a biographical sketch of her uncle, Halima paused suddenly and looked up, saying, "You know, if you really want to know about what happened during the war, you should ask his wife."

I was astonished to hear that the widow of a man who was in his fifties at the outbreak of the Second World War was still alive. Certainly none of the scholars who had written about the rescue of the Haggadah had mentioned her as a source of information. Soon after, I travelled to Sarajevo to meet Servet Korkut. Halima Korkut was also in Sarajevo, assisting a new contingent of American diplomats, so she offered to translate for me. Servet lives alone, on a low floor of a hillside apartment block in one of the least shelled neighborhoods of the shrapnel-torn city. An elegant and vivacious woman of eighty-one with lively, deep-set brown eyes and silver hair swept back from a still unlined brow, she greeted us warmly. Halima and I took off our shoes at the door, according to the Bosnian custom. Servet's sunlit sitting room was lined with shelves of art books. A watercolor of a village mosque and pastel drawings of Sarajevo's famous landmark water fountain hung on the walls. It was early spring; the birch trees outside the windows had not yet begun to leaf out, and snow still flared on the summit of a nearby mountain. Servet offered us a glass of her homemade sour-cherry cordial and sat down to talk about the two brutal wars she had lived through.

When the Korkuts married, in 1940, less than a year before the invasion of Yugoslavia, Servet, an ethnic Albanian, was only sixteen years old; Dervis was thirty-seven years her senior. In Albanian families, arranged marriages were the norm. "But my father asked me if I liked Dervis, if I wanted to marry him," Servet said. "He looked much younger than his age. I couldn't tell he was older than me. I liked him very much. And I think he waited so late to marry because he was waiting for me." When I asked to see a wedding picture, Servet opened her hands in her lap. "All gone," she said. The home in which she kept the memorabilia of her marriage was close to the old city and was reduced to rubble by Serbs in 1994. The modern apartment that she now occupies belongs to her son, Munib, who lives in Paris. It was only at the height of the siege that Servet was persuaded to leave Sarajevo and stay with her son. As soon as the war was over, she insisted on returning. "I wasn't afraid," she said. "Not in that war, or the other one."

Servet remembers very clearly the day her husband came home for lunch with the Haggadah still under his jacket. "I knew he had a book from the library, and that it was very important," she recalled. "He said, 'Take care, don't tell. No one must know or they'll kill us and destroy the book.' " Over the midday meal, he pondered what to do with the Haggadah. That afternoon, he drove out of the city, to Visoko, where one of his sisters lived, on the pretext of visiting her. From there, he took the book to a remote village on nearby Trescavica, where his friend was *hodza*, or imam, of the small local mosque. There, Servet said, the Haggadah was hidden among Korans and other Islamic texts for the duration of the war. When it was safe, "the *hodza* brought it back to us, and Dervis returned it to the museum," she said.

When I asked the name of the imam, she tapped her head with an apologetic smile and made a fluttering gesture, as if the memories had flown away. Halima sighed. "Two years ago, she knew it," she said. "She mentioned the name to me. But we didn't write it down."

The reason for that became clearer as the afternoon wore on. As I learned from Servet, and then from Munib, when I met with him later in Paris, the rescue of a Jewish book may be what Dervis is best remembered for. But what really matters in the Korkut family is another rescue—of a young Jewish woman. "In our family, the Haggadah is a detail," Munib told me. "What my father did for Jewish people—that is the biggest thing that we, in our family, have to be proud of." As Servet and I talked on into the fading light of that spring afternoon, she became increasingly engaged by her memories of that other rescue. It was a story of bravery, betrayal, and restitution that had shaped her life and the lives of her children, long after her husband's death.

SUBJECT, VERB, OBJECT

I is not ego, not the sum
of your unique experiences,
just, democratically,
whoever's talking,
a kind of motel room,
yours till the end—
that is, of the sentence.

The language, actually,
doesn't think *I* 's important,
stressing, even in
grandiose utterances—
e.g., I *came*
I *saw* I *conquered*—
the other syllables.

Oh, it's a technical problem,
sure, the rhyme
on so-so-open
lie, *cry*, *I*
harder to stitch tight
than the ozone
hole in the sky.

But worst is its plodding insistence—
I, *I*, *I*—
somebody huffing uphill,
face red as a stop sign,
scared by a doctor
or some *He She It*
surprised in the mirror.

—*James Richardson*

In April of 1942, soon after the Haggadah had been taken to safety, Dervis once again came home from the library unexpectedly. This time, Servet recalled, it was a person he needed to hide, rather than a book. " 'This is a Jewish girl,' he said to me. 'We have to keep her safe here.' " Servet remembers a short, studious-looking young woman with spectacles who had been a high-school senior before the Numerus Clausus laws prevented Jews from attending state institutions. "Of course, I accepted her," Servet said. She gave her one of her own traditional Muslim veils (a *zar*), which conceal the body and most of the face like a chador. The girl's name was Mira Papo, but the Korkuts called her Amira, passing her off as a Muslim servant sent from a rural Albanian village by Servet's family to help with the Korkuts' infant son, Munib. "I told her if anyone came to the door she should go to the pantry." Servet said that the two of them, both just nineteen years old, became great friends. In spite of the immense risks, she told me, "I loved having someone my own age around. She called me Auntie Servet."

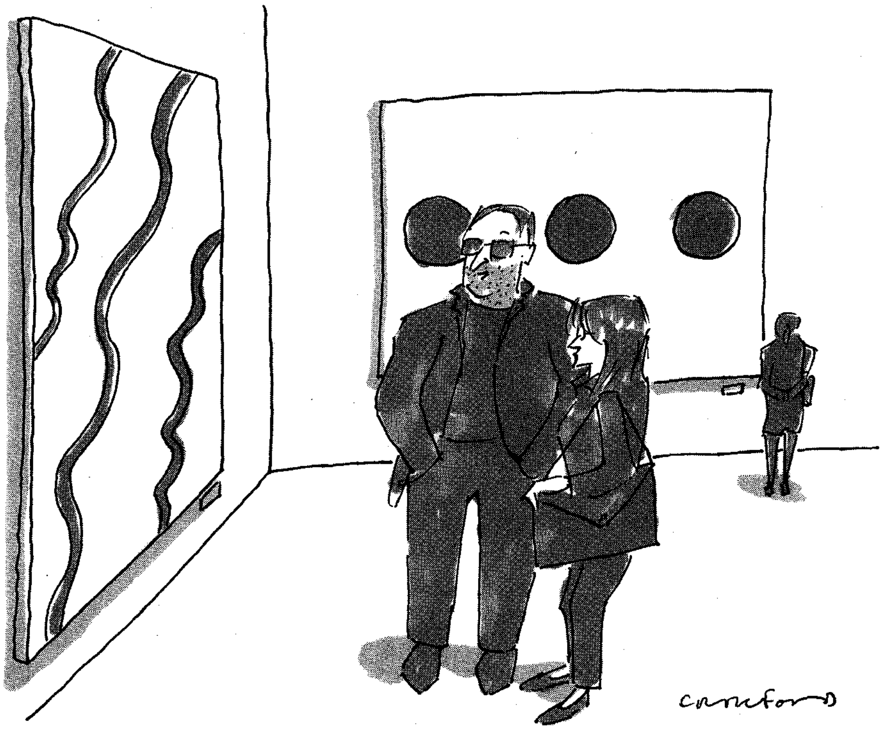
Mira Papo, like the majority of the ten thousand Jews in Sarajevo before the war, was from a family of Ladino-speaking Sephardim, descendants of Spanish exiles who, over the centuries, had made the same journey as the Sarajevo Haggadah. As early as 1565, the first Jews had settled in what was then an Ottoman market crossroads. As the city grew to graceful, cosmopolitan maturity, they lived largely unmolested, little-noticed lives, with very few rising to positions of wealth or influence. By the time the Austro-Hungarian Empire occupied Bosnia, in the late nineteenth century, and Sarajevo began to receive a small influx of Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazi Jews, the city was known for its tolerance. The Muslims' mosques, the churches of the Serbian Orthodox, and the Croatian Catholics occupied the same city blocks as the synagogues, and residential neighborhoods were mostly mixed. Yet had it not been for the accidents of war there is little chance that Mira would ever have known the Korkuts. The Papos were neither prominent nor prosperous: Mira's father, Salomon Papo, worked as a janitor at the Finance Ministry; her grandfather was a laborer who sold seeds at Sarajevo's outdoor market.

Not long after Croatian Ustashe forces began ethnically cleansing Sarajevo of Serbs and Jews, Mira's father was rounded up along with other Jewish men and sent to a so-called labor camp. These camps were little more than way stations of starvation and brutality en route to Bosnia's notorious death pits. Bosnia-Herzegovina sits on a limestone lacework of underground caves. The geology, as Brian Hall wrote in "The Impossible Country," is "a mass-murderer's dream come true, a mighty necropolis of empty mass graves, high and dry, waiting to be filled." Jews and Serbs—Salomon Papo most probably among them—had their throats cut before they were pushed off the edge. Then grenades were hurled in.

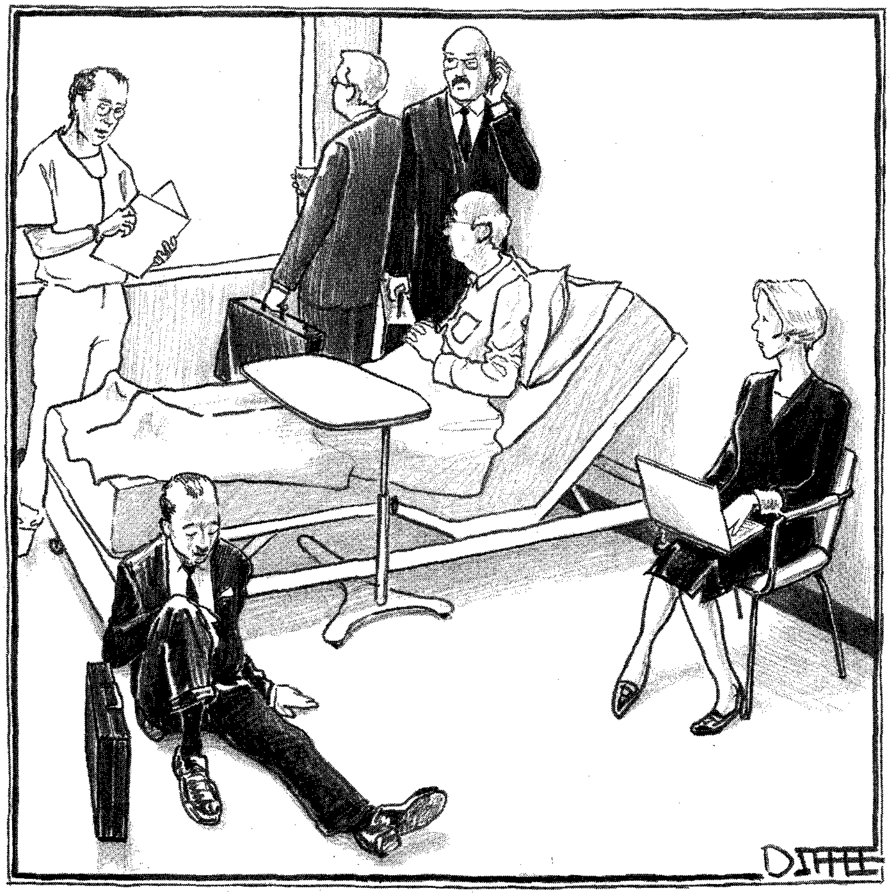
The women were taken later that year. Mira defied an order to assemble at a Jewish community center. When she found that her mother and two of her aunts were being held there, she climbed in through a back window and urged them to try to escape from the city with her. When they refused, she said that she would stay with them, but they insisted that she get away and survive. From a hiding place, she watched as the women were loaded onto trucks.

Mira managed to escape from Sarajevo and joined the Communist partisan Resistance. Before the war, she had been a member of the Young Guardians—Hashomer Hazair, in Hebrew—a socialist Zionist youth movement based on the Scouts but designed to encourage migration to Israel. Mira had to slip away to the group's twice-weekly meetings because her father did not approve of its modern, secular bent. The Young Guardians fostered an ethos of idealism and self-sacrifice, qualities held to be necessary to future Zionist pioneers. The group had hiked in the Sarajevan mountains and learned outdoor skills and first aid, which were now useful to the partisans. At the beginning of the war, when Josip Broz Tito—who was to become Yugoslavia's leader in the Communist era—called for Yugoslavians of all ethnicities and political persuasions to rise up against the German occupation, members of Mira's youth group joined an *odred*, or partisan unit. Generally outnumbered by the German forces, they used classic guerrilla tactics, conducting hit-and-run strikes and then retreating to the mountains, where local people could be counted on to help them hide. Throughout the brutal mountain winter of 1942, Mira Papo served as muleteer and medic as her unit harassed the Germans. The mule was essential to the *odred's* survival, carrying ammunition and medical supplies. Memoirs by British and American officers who, at a later stage in the war, conducted daring parachute drops into partisan territory, romanticize the partisans as bands of high-spirited boys and girls who might dance late into the night in a farmer's barn before setting out to blow up a bridge. Reportedly, they wore grenades on their belts, which they would use to commit suicide rather than risk capture, torture, and betrayal of their comrades.

At this early stage of the Resistance, there were two anti-Fascist forces, Tito's Communist partisans and the mostly Serbian group known as the Chetniks, anti-Communists who sought the restoration of the exiled Yugoslav king, Peter II. For a while, the two groups buried their ideological differences, but eventually the Chetniks turned on the partisans, and by March, 1942, the partisans were in disarray, with high casualties and increasing numbers of deserters. Tito ordered a ruthless reorganization of his forces. Mira's depleted *odred* was commanded to gather in a wide field, where for two or three days the unit was culled of "ballast." Thirty youths—students, laborers, farmers, and even a few Communist Party members, all of them Jews from Sarajevo—were told that they weren't tough enough to face the coming hardships, or skilled enough to wage a highly mobile war. They were stripped



"It's meaningless, lady, believe me—I painted it."



"I'm afraid you're retaining lawyers."

of their weapons and instructed to wait in the field for half a day, until the reorganized units got clear of the area. Then they were to return to Sarajevo. Anyone who disobeyed would be shot.

The abandoned Jews split into small groups of three or four to increase their chances of eluding German patrols. For days and nights, the young Jews moved through the forest unarmed, hunted constantly by Germans and their dogs. Those who were discovered often died gruesomely. One account tells of captured partisans being tied up on a roadway and repeatedly run over by German trucks. Of the thirty partisans, only a handful made it back to Sarajevo alive. Mira was one of them.

"I entered Sarajevo at dawn of a spring day. The streets were still empty," Mira later wrote. She was carrying a few eggs tied up in a scarf that had been given to her by the family of one of her comrades, whose mother had also supplied her with papers allowing her to enter the occupied city.

Exhausted and preoccupied, Mira drifted toward the center of the city, "thinking about what to do, who to go to." Lost in these thoughts, she suddenly realized that she had come to the Finance Ministry building, where her late father had been a janitor. The only light in the building at that early hour came from the porters' room. Mira heard footsteps, and a man emerged from the shadows. She recognized him. The porter was a decent, honorable man who had been her father's friend. "I called out his name and the traditional Bosnian greeting, 'God help us.'"

He did not recognize her after her year of hardship. "Then he said, 'Are you Salomonova?'"—Salomon's daughter—"I nodded my head and then I started to cry."

The porter took her to a cloakroom, and she told him her story of flight and survival. At the end of it, she said, "Save me if you can. If not, then give me to the Ustashe." Taking her by the hand, he led her to the porters' room of the nearby National Museum, where she waited for what "seemed like an eternity." The porter had spoken "not one word," and she had no idea what his intentions were.

He finally returned with a distinguished-looking gentleman wearing a fez, who led her out of the museum by a back door and drove her to his home. For four months, Mira lived in hiding with the Korkuts. Then, in August, a stranger arrived with an envelope for her containing false identity papers and a rail ticket. An aunt who was married to a Catholic had arranged for her to hide in a family house on the Dalmatian coast, where there were no Germans. She stayed there until the end of the war.

After the war, anyone who had served with the partisans was well placed in the new Tito regime. Mira returned to Sarajevo, and was commissioned as an officer in the Army medical corps. She became engaged to a fellow Army officer, also a former partisan, named Bozidar Bakovic. Their future in the Communist era seemed assured.

But one day in June, 1946, as Mira later wrote, she was walking in the city when "an unknown woman fell under my legs" begging help for her husband, who was being tried as a Nazi collaborator. Mira had no idea who the woman was. "I asked her how she knew me. She took off her black veil, and instantly I recognized Dervis Efendi's wife. She held the hand of a boy of four, whom I had left an infant in 1942."

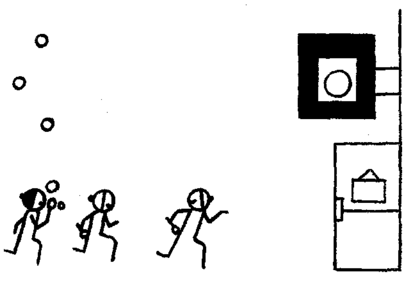
In postwar Yugoslavia, as Tito strengthened his hold on power, he used war-crimes trials to silence dissident voices. Dervis Korkut had proved just as unwilling to bow to Communist excesses as he had to Fascism. He had become an outspoken critic of Yugoslavia's oppressive attitudes toward religion, and of its new Prime Minister's plan to raze the old Ottoman buildings of Sarajevo and replace them with Soviet-style modernist blocks. He had also compiled a list of people who had been executed by Chetniks in eastern Bosnia. For Tito's regime, which had granted amnesty to many of the defeated Chetniks (though not to the Fascist Ustashe) and saw the suppression of intercommunal rifts as crucial to the consolidation of the unified Communist state, such list-making was inconvenient. Before long, Dervis Korkut's name appeared among those who had aided the Fascists. At the notoriously harsh prison in Zenica, he was placed in solitary confinement.

On the afternoon that Servet talked with me about Mira, she recalled that desperate day in downtown Sarajevo. "I don't remember kneeling," she said wryly, as I read to her from Mira's later account. "I'm not the kneeling type." Still, the situation was grave. She was relieved to have found a firsthand witness to her husband's anti-Fascist activities, and overjoyed when Mira assured her that she would testify in court on his behalf.

But Mira did not show up for the trial. Her fiancé feared that the wrath of the Party would be turned upon her, perhaps even lethally, if Mira, as a member of the military, appeared as a witness in what was clearly a politically motivated trial. He refused to let her leave their apartment and give evidence for the man who had saved her life. In the years to come, even as Mira came to experience further hardships and difficulties, she was haunted by the thought of Korkut. She assumed that he had been executed, and imagined her friend Servet bringing up her son alone.

Mira's husband died just two years later, from a brain infection contracted while digging mass graves for the war dead at Sutjeska. Having lost her entire family in the war, Mira found herself alone with two infant sons, Daniel and Davor. Recently demobilized from the Army, she lost her right to military housing and was homeless until a friend of her parents offered her a room. Mira lobbied with great determination until the Army took her back as a medical officer, in charge of public health on the Dalmatian coast and its islands. Davor, now a wiry man of sixty, recalls going by boat with his mother on her rounds, and having soldiers as babysitters. Eventually, they settled in Rijeka, on the northern coast. The town had a Jewish community center, and Davor remembers his surprise when, for the first time, his mother, anti-religious and a committed Communist, took him there to celebrate Hanukkah. He became attached to his Jewish heritage. In 1969, after completing his Army service, he happened to meet the captain of an Israeli freighter, and, on impulse, he boarded the ship. He settled in Israel, first joining a kibbutz and later moving to an agricultural coöperative, or moshav, in the Judaean hills, where he now works as a metalworker and sculptor. Mira followed him to Israel in 1972. She learned Hebrew and soon joined Davor's kibbutz, working in the laundry and helping to run the community center. In 1978, she moved to Jerusalem to be closer to Israel's small community of former Sarajevans. During the breakup of Yugoslavia and the siege of Sarajevo from 1992 to 1996, Israel offered temporary shelter to Bosnian refugees. It was likely one of them who left behind an out-of-date newsletter that Mira came across in 1994. The newsletter was printed in Serbo-Croatian and featured items of interest to Jews in the former Yugoslavia. In it was an article commemorating Dervis Korkut. Spellbound, Mira read about the good deeds of the man she had failed. The article related Korkut's role in saving the Sarajevo Haggadah, which had once again been rescued during war by a Muslim. (In 1992, when the museum was being shelled by Serb forces, who later burned the city's libraries to ashes, a librarian named Enver Imamovic retrieved the book and took it secretly to a bank vault.) As she read the account, Mira realized that Korkut had not been executed, as she had always assumed. She learned that he had died an elderly man, from natural causes, in 1969. Davor's wife remembers her mother-in-law, after finding the article, weeping and murmuring to herself in Serbo-Croatian. It was the first she or Davor had heard of Dervis Korkut.

The teen-ager Korkut had rescued in 1941 was now seventy-two years old. She decided to give the testimony she had failed to deliver at Korkut's trial. On a winter day in 1994, Mira sat down to write a three-page, single-spaced letter to the Commission for the Designation of the Righteous at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial and study center. Inexpertly typed in Serbo-Croatian, with accents added by hand, the letter states in a rather formal preamble that what follows is "my true story, how Dervis Efendi Korkut saved me from certain death." In stilted, formal phrases, Mira unflinchingly details her failure to help Dervis Korkut. When she learned that he had survived despite this, she wrote, "it was as if a stone fell from my heart."



By describing what really happened, Mira wrote, she hoped to make amends: "Perhaps this modest material will help to clarify his identity as a great friend of the Jews of Bosnia long before World War II. I remain as a solitary witness that Dervis was indeed so, even in a time when we had few true friends." Mira died in 1998, just a year too soon to see how completely her belated testimony would accomplish the restitution she desired.

At the time that Mira was writing her account, Servet Korkut was in reluctant exile from Sarajevo; after suffering a minor heart attack, she was living with her son, Munib, in Paris. She was astonished when an Israeli diplomat called to tell her that she and Dervis had just been named Righteous Among Nations. Their names would be inscribed in the gardens of Yad Vashem, not far from the trees planted in memory of famous rescuers of Jews, such as Raoul Wallenberg and Oskar Schindler. Because Servet was unable to travel to Israel to see their names inscribed, a ceremony was held for her at the Israeli Embassy in Paris. She was presented with a certificate of honor and a medal, and told that she had the right to Israeli citizenship. She was also awarded a monthly stipend from the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, a New York-based organization that provides material support to some thirteen hundred elderly rescuers.

"Mira called me in Paris," Servet told me. She explained why she had failed to appear at the trial, and how tormented she had been by that failure. Servet said she tried to soothe her old friend, telling her that, even if she had testified, it would have made no difference, because the court was just a tool of the regime and the regime had already made its decision. "Mira said that ever since she left

Yugoslavia she had wanted to get in touch with me, to apologize, but that she wasn't able," Servet told me. "'It's O.K.,' I said to her. 'I understand.'"

Others had come forward to testify for Dervis at his trial. "But nobody wanted to listen to them," Servet told me. Convicted of Fascist associations, he served six years of an eight-year sentence, most of it in solitary confinement. "They kept him alone because they considered him dangerous," Servet said. His ideas could too easily infect and inspire other prisoners. Family accounts say he endured his imprisonment with uncommon fortitude: he never complained or asked his jailers for mercy, and eventually the prison guards came to regard him with awe. Despite the hard conditions of the prison, he managed to keep himself clean and well groomed, and he occupied his mind by reading whenever he was allowed.

Because Servet was now the wife of a convicted enemy of the state, her apartment was confiscated and her food ration rescinded. With Munib, now five years old, and a two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Abida, she was forced into the streets. Dervis's large and prosperous family proved unwilling to risk the opprobrium of association with her. It was left to her own relatives to offer shelter, so she went to stay with one of them, a shoemaker who lived in Kosovska Mitrovica, in the province of Kosovo. Servet arrived there with her children in the middle of a meningitis outbreak. Abida became infected, and fifteen days later she was dead.

It was a two-day journey from Servet's town to the Zenica jail, and visitors were allowed to spend only five minutes with prisoners. When I visited Munib Korkut in his apartment in Paris recently, he recalled making the journey to the jail with his mother. An imposing man in a black Lacoste shirt, Munib bore a strong resemblance to the photographs I had seen of his father. He spoke in a rumbling baritone, expressing great bitterness about his mother's suffering and the failure of so many relatives to help her. "I am like the Albanians," he said. "We never pardon. Never." An engineer and designer who manages large projects for Technip, a French firm active in Kazakhstan, he said that his father had given him a love of languages—he speaks six—and a curiosity about other cultures that had shaped his career.

He said that he would never forget the trip to the prison with his mother, and seeing his father, separated from them by a wooden partition. "The first thing he said to my mother was 'Where is Abida?'" Munib recalled. "My mother said, 'Abida died,' and I saw my father cry."

After he was released, Dervis was allowed to resume his old job, but life was not entirely easy. His passport was never returned to him, and he was denied citizenship rights. In 1955, a daughter, Lamija, was born. Dervis, then sixty-seven years old, had not wanted to have another child after his long jail term. "He didn't want, but I wanted," Servet had told me, adding, "Women always find a way." Lamija, thirteen years younger than her brother, was shielded from the family's difficult past, and doted on by her father. Munib told me, "Even though he was an old man when she was born, my sister is completely the product of my father. He connected so much with her." Dervis and Lamija were very close until he died, when Lamija was fourteen years old. "I always felt I could ask him about anything and he would explain it patiently to me," Lamija told me. "When I was a small child, afraid before going to sleep, he would tell me a story, over and over. I could visit him at work, anything, and he always had time for me—except when he was watching the news," she added with a laugh. "When he died," Lamija recalled, "so many people came to the house, saying, 'He helped me find a job,' 'He gave me loans,' 'He guaranteed my credit,' 'He found a flat for me.' Then I realized how he was a good person and how many good things he did and never mentioned." One thing he had never mentioned was his rescue of Mira Papo, just as Mira had never mentioned it to her children. Lamija learned in vague terms that her parents had sheltered a Jewish woman in their house during the siege of Sarajevo: Sarajevan Jews, unaffected, for once, by the ethnic hatreds of the war, had arranged a convoy out of the city, and Servet was given a place in it.

Lamija became an economist. She married an electrical engineer who was an Albanian, like her mother, from Kosovo. The couple settled in the provincial capital, Pristina, and had two children. By 1999, just as the Dayton Accords were helping to bring a semblance of normalcy back to Sarajevo, Kosovo had started to slide toward war. The Albanian majority in Kosovo had been politically suppressed by the Serbian government, and in 1998 a campaign of ethnic cleansing began in earnest. As Peter Hellman wrote in "When Courage Was Stronger Than Fear," alarming reports filtered into Pristina of brutal attacks on Albanian villages and of the public rape of young women.

In March, 1999, when NATO, spurred to action by stories of widespread atrocities, started bombing Serb positions, Servet was in Pristina visiting her daughter. "My mother left on the last bus to Bosnia," Lamija told me. "I said to her, 'I don't want you to go through another war.'" After Servet's departure, Lamija and her husband spent days on the phone trying to get visas that would allow them and their children to leave the country. While her husband called relatives in Sweden, Lamija contacted Munib, who pulled every string he could with friends in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris, but to no avail. Next, she tried to evacuate her daughter and her son, aged nineteen and sixteen. With great difficulty, she managed to get them out of the city.

Soon after the children left, the power to Lamija's apartment was cut off. Then their phone lines went down. Through a wall of the apartment, Lamija could hear the phone next door ringing. The neighbors were Serbs, and she was disturbed to realize that the lines were being cut on the basis of ethnicity.

On April 2nd, Lamija heard Serbian militiamen banging on the door of the neighbors downstairs, ordering them to leave. She and her husband joined thousands of refugees surging toward the train station. They considered themselves lucky to be packed aboard an overcrowded train—"twenty-seven people in a carriage made for six," Lamija recalled—even though they had no idea what their destination would be. At dusk, they arrived at the border with Macedonia. In the press to disembark,

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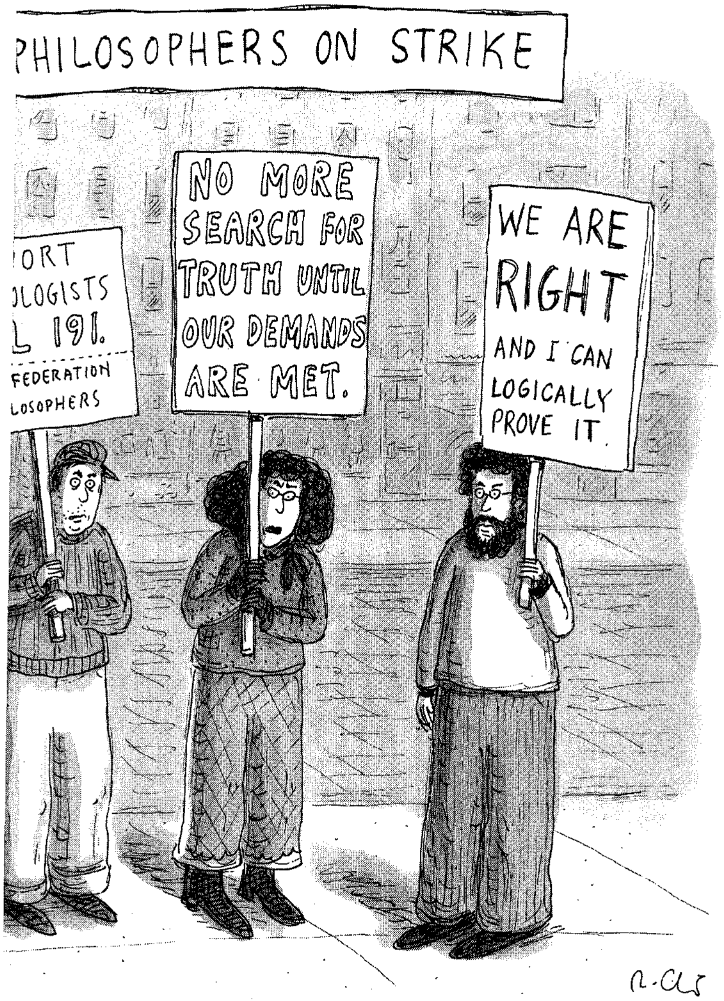
ble to the Israeli media,
and to its politicians. The Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, was at the airport to welcome them. "Today, we are closing a great circle in that the state of Israel, which emerged from the ashes, gives refuge to the daughter of those who saved Jews," he said.

"Are you happy to be in Israel?" a reporter shouted. Exhausted by the journey and the ordeal that had preceded it, missing her children, anxious about the unexpected attention, uncertain of her future as a refugee in an unknown, very foreign place, Lamija hardly knew how to answer.

Then, in the midst of all the chaos, someone addressed her in Serbo-Croatian. "It was a good feeling, to have someone speaking your language," she said. But she had no idea who it could be, greeting her so warmly. Pushing through the crowd was a slender, wiry man she had never seen before, with a shock of dark hair and a mustache. Opening his arms, he introduced himself, and Lamija fell into the embrace of Davor Bakovic, the son of Mira Papo. ♦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FICTION

THE VISITOR

By MARISA SILVER

The new boy was three-quarters gone. Both legs below the knee and the left arm at the shoulder. Candy spent her lunch hour lying on the lawn outside the V.A. hospital, sending nicotine clouds into the cloudless sky, wondering whether it would be better to have one leg and no arms—or, if you were lucky enough to have an arm and a leg left, whether it would be better to have them on opposite sides, for balance. In her six months as a nurse's aide, she had become thoughtful about the subtle hierarchy of human disintegration. Blind versus deaf—that was a no-brainer, no brain being perhaps the one wound in her personal calculus that could not be traded in for something worse.

It was sad. Of course it was sad. But she didn't feel sad. Sad was what people said they were in the face of tragedies as serious as suicide bombings or as minor as a lost earring. It was a word that people used to tidy up and put the problem out of sight.

The grass was making needle-like pricks through the thin material of her maroon scrubs, and she sat up, smoothing her matching V-neck over her chest and belly, feeling the familiar stab of self-consciousness as her hand rode over the unfashionable lumps. In photographs, Candy's mother, Sylvie, at twenty-two—Candy's age now—was as skinny as dripping water, but that could have been a result of the drugs. Candy had her grandmother's build, and she knew that with age her shape would settle into the short, hale block that was Marjorie, less body than space-saver.

Candy glanced at her watch. She still had ten minutes until the end of her break.

She wasn't sure when she had last felt sad. She knew that she must have been sad when she was eleven and her mother had gone into the hospital for the last time. But she couldn't actually recall the feeling. She did remember being happy afterward, sitting at her grandmother's kitchen table picking walnuts out of their shells with the tines of a fork, while Marjorie made phone calls to let people know that Sylvie had landed on her final and terminal addiction: death. She listened to Marjorie say, "My baby *diiihd*," the last vestiges of her Texas accent breathing so much air into the word that Candy could almost see it flying up toward the ceiling of the kitchen like a helium balloon. Sylvie's presence in Candy's life had been birdlike. She had swooped into Marjorie's apartment from time to time to drop a Big Mac into Candy's waiting mouth, but the enthusiasm that she'd carried with her usually dissipated quickly, smothered as much by Marjorie's insistence on behaving as if nothing were out of the ordinary as by Candy's abject need.

Candy recalled feeling another sort of happiness, too, when she had crawled over the railing of the hospital bed in order to lie next to her mother one last time. Marjorie had forced Candy to wear a new party dress she'd sewn the day before. The frock, made with leftover material from the flower-girl dress that Marjorie had been working on, was an embarrassing pink affair that grabbed at the tender buds of Candy's new breasts with tight smocking. What was the point, Candy had whined, as Marjorie finished off the hem, breathing heavily through her nose, her mouth a cactus of pins. But in the hospital, lying beside her mother, Candy had understood why she was so dressed up: she was there to act out the role of daughter in the hope that Sylvie would wake and finally take up her own part in the charade of parenting that Marjorie had insisted on whenever Sylvie showed up at the apartment—as if Sylvie had come back not for food or a shower or money but to French-braid Candy's hair or to explain menstruation to her. The metal guardrails on the bed had felt cold against Candy's thighs. The sensation was shocking in a pleasurable way that she couldn't name then, but it wasn't long before she discovered that the faucet in her grandmother's bathtub could be angled to hit her between the legs just so.

When Candy first started working at the V.A., the other aides had said that it would take her a long time to become "used to it." They'd told her to look away from the wounds, to focus on the soldiers' faces as a way to protect the boys from embarrassment and herself from disgust. But she was not disgusted, even when she had to rewrap stumps or sponge gashes that were sewn up like shark bites. She found these molestations frankly interesting, the body deconstructed so that you could see what it really was: just bits and pieces, really, no different from the snatches of fabric that Marjorie wrestled into dresses for Mr. Victor of Paris, the tailor in Burbank who had employed her for thirty-seven years. The nurses praised Candy's bravery, but when she passed by a group of aides taking their break in the cafeteria one afternoon she knew from their covert glances that they found her strange. She once overheard a girl say that she had no heart.

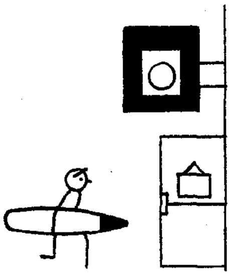
Well, no heart was better than no brain, Candy thought, as she sucked on the last of her cigarette and stubbed it out in the grass, dismissing the notion that she might cause a brushfire in this hottest of seasons. She knew that hers was not a singular life, that she would not be the cause of anything monumental. Recently, the thermometer had topped out at a hundred and nine in the valley. The power had failed in her grandmother's apartment complex, where Candy had lived all her life. Marjorie, excited by the idea of a disaster that she might have some control over, had instructed Candy to gather her important papers, as if she expected the apartment to burst into spontaneous flames. Candy scanned the top of her dresser, where her community-college diploma sat in its Plexiglas frame, alongside assorted gift-with-purchase tubes of lipstick and miniature eyeshadow compacts. In a gesture that even at the time she regarded as TV-movie maudlin, she had put her mother's Communion cross around her neck and lain down on her bed. When she was woken by the sudden snap of lights turning on and the sound of her window fan whirring to life, she took off the necklace and placed it back in her dresser drawer. She showered and went to bed naked, letting the fan blow its slow, oscillating wind across her body.

The new boy's name was Gregorio Villalobos. Juana, the admitting nurse, told Candy that *lobo* meant "wolf" in Spanish. Down the hall lay a Putter and a Shooter, boys who clung to their jaunty monikers as though they were one day going to walk out of the hospital and back onto the golf course or the basketball court where they had earned those nicknames. Candy wondered if the new boy had been called El Lobo in the service. She could ask him, but he wouldn't answer her. He had not yet spoken. He watched her as she moved around the room, his eyes tracking her as if she were a fly and he was waiting for the right moment to bring down his

LORI GRINKER, "USNS COMFORT" (2003)/CONTACT PRESS IMAGES

swatter. Most of the boys looked at her when she brought them food or checked on I.V. bags, but their gazes were like those of old dogs: hope combined with the absence of hope. The nurses chattered at the boys as they went about their work, talking about the weather or whatever sports trivia they had picked up from their husbands. In general, the boys went along with this, and Candy often felt as if she were watching a play in which all the actors had agreed to pretend that someone onstage had not just taken a huge shit. Candy knew that the nurses were scared of silence, and perhaps the boys were, too. The truth hid in silence.

Before she left the room, she looked at El Lobo's chart. It wasn't her business to read charts, simply to mark down what he did and didn't eat, did and didn't expel. She'd received minimal training, most of which had to do with things that anyone who'd ever cleaned a house would know, and she couldn't understand much of what was written on the chart. But she did understand the phrase "elective muteness." She stared at El Lobo, feeling words crawling up inside her, pushing to get past her closed lips—that pathetic human need to communicate when there was nothing to say. She had been this way when her mother was alive. On the occasions when Sylvie was home, Candy had told her anything she could think of to tell: what had happened at school that day, what clothing the popular girls were wearing, how pretty she thought Sylvie looked, with her dark hair parted down the center and hanging on either side of her narrow face like a magician's cape. She'd talk and talk, and the more she suspected that her mother didn't care what she was saying, the more she'd fill the apartment with her desperate noise.



She replaced the chart on the hook at the foot of the bed and glanced at El Lobo once more before leaving the room. She could hold her silence longer than he could. He had no idea who he was dealing with.

That night, she woke to the sound of her grandmother yelling at the ghost.

"Get outta here *riii-ght* this minute!" Marjorie said, her accent always thicker when she was torn from her dreams, as if her unconscious resided in Beaumont, Texas, while the rest of her kept pace in L.A. Water splashed noisily against the porcelain sink in the bathroom between Candy's and Marjorie's bedrooms.

Candy lay in her bed, which had been her mother's childhood bed, the headboard still bearing the Day-Glo flower stickers her mother had affixed to it. Candy tried to imagine Sylvie as a naïve girl who liked stickers, but it was impossible. What she remembered most about her mother was the patchouli scent of her skin, underneath which hid a more elusive, dirty smell, an odor that Candy yearned to excavate whenever Sylvie was near. But Sylvie did not often let her daughter get that close. Even during the times when she was living at home, when she swore to Marjorie that she was clean, and Marjorie decided, all pinny-eyed, fidgety evidence to the contrary, to believe her, Sylvie kept herself apart. She'd take over her old room, leaving Candy to the foldout sofa in the living room, and Candy would spend the early-evening hours inventing reasons to walk past the bedroom door, hoping that it might open, that she might be invited in.

Candy listened as her grandmother hurried into the bathroom to turn off the faucet.

"Turn that water on again and I'll murder you!" Marjorie said, on her way past Candy's room to the kitchen. "It's quarter past three, for Lord's sake."

Candy got out of bed and made her way to the kitchen, too. Marjorie wore her quilted bathrobe, and her bulb of short graying hair was lopsided from lying in bed. She had already set the kettle on the stove. "Ah, she woke you up, too," she said, shaking her head ruefully.

"*You* woke me up," Candy said, sitting down at the table. "You probably woke the whole building."

"That ghost is running up my water bill. It has to stop."

"Maybe he's thirsty," Candy said.

"He's a she, and ghosts don't drink, darlin'. They have no bodies. She just turns on the tap to get my goat. *And in a dry season, no less!*" she yelled, shaking her fist in the air, as if the ghost were hiding just outside the kitchen door. The wattle beneath Marjorie's upper arm wavered and Candy remembered how she had played with that loose skin as a child. Something about her grandmother's excesses of flesh was comforting. On bad nights, when Candy felt an aching maw open up in her chest, she'd slip into Marjorie's bed. Her nameless dread was always calmed when her cheeks grazed the loose bags of her grandmother's nylon-swaddled breasts.

Marjorie set down two mugs on the kitchen table, then brought over the kettle and poured. "I'll tell you what, though. I'm tired of waking up in the middle of the night. I'm too old for it."

"Maybe we should have an exorcism."

"You don't believe in that foolishness, I hope. Oh, you're just teasing me, you bad girl," she added, when she saw Candy's grin.

"We got a new boy in," Candy said, changing the subject. "He's a mess."

"Ahh," Marjorie said, sympathetically, replacing the kettle on the stove.

"No one's come to visit him. It's been two days."

"Maybe he has no one."

"They're usually there at admitting with their balloons and those smiles. You can see them counting the minutes until they can get the hell out of there."

"You're harsh, baby girl. It's not easy to see something destroyed."

Candy looked at her grandmother's hands. Arthritis was beginning to shape them, like some devious sculptor, and it wouldn't be long before she could no longer work a sewing machine or hold needle and thread. What then? Could they survive on Marjorie's Social Security and Candy's pathetic salary? Candy remembered Marjorie's younger, stronger hands cupping Sylvie's cheeks as she tried to wake her, tried to get her to stand up from the living-room floor where she had collapsed sometime during the night. "Time to get your girl to school!" she'd say, her determination fending off the futility of her effort. Candy remembered, too, her grandmother's calloused grip around her own small hand when they made those hurried journeys to school together, more often than not leaving Sylvie behind, curled up on herself like a pill bug.

El Lobo was, of course, where Candy had left him the afternoon before, lying in his bed, gazing up at the ceiling. She raised the mattress so that he was facing forward, placed his breakfast tray on the rolling table, and swung it across the bed. She removed the lid of the oatmeal and the canned pears and peeled off the layer of plastic wrap covering the glass of water. The meal's monochromatic paleness was disheartening, but Candy dug into the oatmeal with a spoon and lifted it to El Lobo's mouth. He ate dutifully, but without affect, as if some inner computer chip were responsible for the opening and closing of his lips and the gentle modulations of his throat. He made no eye contact with her. Candy took the opportunity to go vacant as well, a state she had perfected as a child. She'd found that she could continue to do what was required of her—clean her room or go through the motions of paying attention in class, even read out loud if the teacher requested it, while her mind wandered. In that peaceful oblivion, she felt swaddled in cotton, divorced from the feelings that usually plagued her, unworried about what she looked like in her homemade clothing or what others thought of the girl with a grandmother for a mother. The sounds of the other children came at her muffled, harmless. Time passed. She disappeared.

She looked over to find that El Lobo's chin was covered with syrup where she had missed his mouth. It irked her that he had let this happen without making any sound to alert her to the problem. She wiped him clean, becoming even more irritated when he didn't seem to register this help, either. She took a last, hard swipe at his mouth. He finally looked at her, and his glance was sharp and full of menace. The ease with which his expression resolved into hatred made it clear that anger was his default position. The nurses talked about the "sweet" boys or the "darling" boys, as if the upside of the physical damage were that it turned a soldier into a feckless three-year-old, thus ridding the world of one more potentially dangerous man. But Candy knew that this boy was neither sweet nor darling, and probably never had been. She imagined him as a bored high-school shark, moving slow and silent through the halls, heavy with his own power and cravings. She had known boys like this, had fucked boys like this.

She marked on his chart the amount of solids and liquids he had consumed, rolled the tray away from his bed, and carried the half-eaten breakfast into the hallway. She spent the next seven hours of her shift changing sheets and emptying bedpans, delivering food baskets that would be at the nurses' station by day's end, as most of the patients had restricted diets or were fed through tubes. She wheeled one boy to X-ray through the maze of hallways and elevators. Every time the gurney lurched over a transom, the boy winced in pain. The first few times, she apologized, but then she stopped, because she knew that her regret, like a basket of muffins, was, in some way, an affront.

Later that day, after she had finished her shift, she returned to El Lobo's room. He was asleep, so she sat in the orange plastic chair in the corner and watched him. As he lay in his bed, covered in blankets, his wounds were invisible; his head, his nutmeg skin, his thick, dark eyebrows and generous, scowling mouth were untouched. A stranger might have thought him one of the lucky ones in this war. Only after his so-called recovery, when he would have to have special clothing made, when he would be assaulted by all the daily acts he could no longer accomplish, would he truly feel the extent of his wounds. She knew about collateral damage, knew that the injuries people saw were never the gravest. After Sylvie died, the school counsellor had brought Candy into her office and handed her a pamphlet called "Teen-Agers and Grief: A Handbook." She'd told Candy that, although it was against state regulations, she was going to give Candy a hug. She'd had no idea about the hard lump of rage that sat lodged in Candy's throat like a nut swallowed whole.

After fifteen minutes, El Lobo's eyes opened. For a second, his expression was soft and pliable, like that of a child waking from a nap, but then his mind took over and something calcified in his features, his muscles hardening against the invasion of thought. His gaze fell on her. She didn't move, but continued to stare at him. He stared back, his upper lip trembling in what she thought was the beginning of an insult. She felt a tingling in her gut, and her nerves were on alert, as if he had actually grazed her skin with that leftover hand. The second-shift nurse's voice cut through the silence as she entered and exited rooms along the hallway, announcing pain-relieving meds in a voice as bright and

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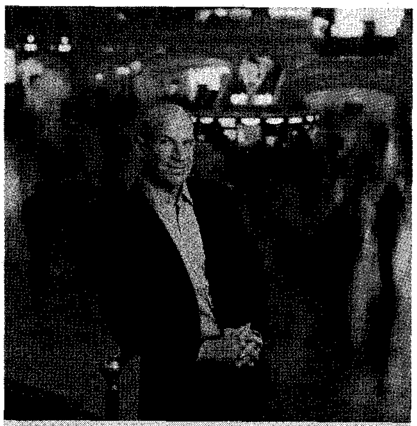

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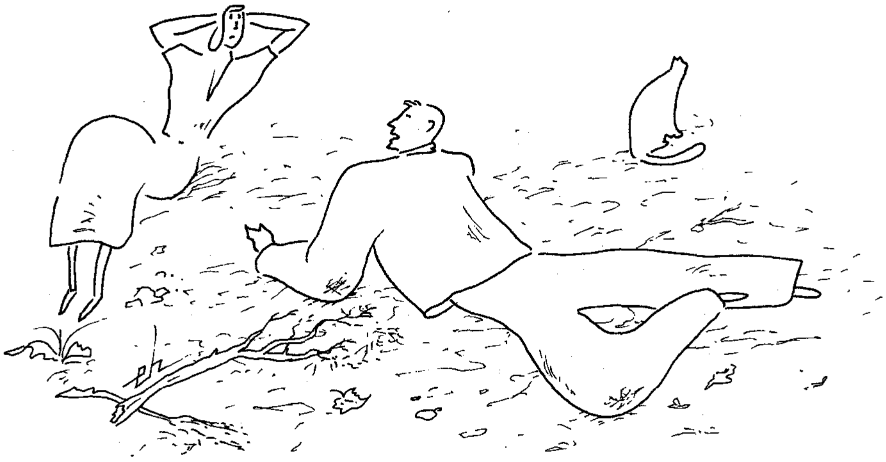

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cutting as a laser. Candy stood and walked over to the bed. She reached under the cover and pinched El Lobo hard on his arm. She heard his sharp intake of breath, and slipped out of the room before she was discovered.

At 3 A.M., Marjorie tore into the bathroom.

"You leave me alone!" she yelled. "I've done enough for you already."

Candy decided to stay in bed. A few times, over the five years since the ghost had announced itself, Candy had tried to stay up all night. She thought that if she could just once catch Marjorie turning on the faucet—perhaps it was sleepwalking, or some early sign of senility—she would stop, and Candy could get some rest. But on those nights either the ghost had not appeared or Candy had dropped off to sleep, despite the cans of Coke littering her bedside table.

She heard the sound of the sewing machine clattering into action. The machine slowed and quickened, and Candy imagined her grandmother's bare foot playing the floor pedal. She knew that she had little chance of getting back to sleep. It was too hot to put on her terry-cloth robe, so, wearing only her T-shirt and underwear, she went into the living room, where Marjorie bent to her task.

"What are you making?" Candy said.

"Right about now, nothing," Marjorie said. She lifted the foot of the sewing machine and pulled the material out, snipped the threads with a pair of scissors, and set to ripping out what she had done. "Victor gives me two weeks to do a bride and four bridesmaids. Two weeks! The man is losing whatever brains he had to begin with."

Candy watched her grandmother's hands shake as she pulled out the tiny stitches with her seam ripper. Marjorie was no longer as adept as she had been when she was younger and able to unroll a bolt of cloth and see every seam and dart, every buttonhole and facing, when she could tell, even before putting one pin into the cloth, how it would all fall together. A dress form stood beside the sewing machine, draped in the raw ivory silk that Marjorie was working with. Headless and armless, the figure tilted slightly on its stand, as if leaning over to tell a secret.

"Expensive," Candy said, fingering the cloth.

"Hands off!" Marjorie ordered, batting Candy's hands away lightly, as she had done when Candy was young. "Spend all this money on silk and then give me next to no time to do my job. This missy will be lucky if the whole thing doesn't come flying apart the minute she starts down the aisle."

"Where's the ghost?"

"Gone, that wretched thing. She'll be back, though. What I ever did to deserve a hauntin', I'll never know."

"Maybe she lived here. Before us. Maybe she wants her place back."

"And it's taken her thirty-five years to show up? Uh-uh."

"What, then?"

"Honey, I'm still trying to figure out the reason people do what they do when they're alive." She finished ripping out the stitches, sighed audibly, and fit the material into the machine again.

Candy went to the window and looked out over the apartment courtyard. The management had recently overhauled the space, taking out the grass and flowers that had required watering and replacing them with decorative pebbles. Only the concrete path that had wound through the garden remained. As a child, Candy had ridden her bike between clumps of impatiens and begonia and stands of banana trees, clumsy with their thick, waxy leaves. She knew every turn and straightaway by heart, but, still, there had been danger inherent in each corner, the thrill of heading into the unseen. She'd been eight when she'd made a turn around a bushel of bamboo and seen her mother lying asleep, across the doormat of Marjorie's apartment. Candy had parked her bike against the wall and squatted down next to Sylvie. She looked pretty lying there, like the illustration of Sleeping Beauty in one of Candy's library books. Candy watched her for a while, as if studying an insect, noting the little flutters of her eyelids and lips, her long, corded neck, the muscles of which seemed tense, even in sleep. Finally, she stepped over her mother and went inside.

"Mommy's back," she told Marjorie, who was hunched over her machine.

Together, they carried an incoherent and moaning Sylvie into the bathroom. Candy sat on the lid of the toilet while Marjorie ran the bath, undressed her daughter, and coaxed her into the water. Sylvie cursed her mother, calling her a bitch and a cunt, but Marjorie didn't react, only shushed her the way she shushed Candy when she was crying over a scraped knee, as if silence trumped pain. Once Sylvie was in the bath, she lay with her eyes closed, head back against the edge of the tub, while Marjorie gently soaped her body, lifting her arms one by one, cleaning between her small breasts and her legs. "Beautiful girl," she sang in an errant, unidentifiable tune. "Beautiful baby girl." Later, the three ate chicken with mushroom-soup sauce at the kitchen table and watched MTV on the twenty-one-inch Sony. In the morning, Sylvie was gone, along with the television.

The apartment was reduced bit by bit over the following years. The microwave followed the television, and then some of Marjorie's jewelry disappeared. Each time Candy came back to the apartment after school, she entered with trepidation, waiting to see what was missing. The relief she felt when she realized that Sylvie had not stolen anything new was always tempered by disappointment. When she and Marjorie arrived home from church one Sunday to find the space where the stereo had sat looking as vacant as a missing tooth, Candy had felt a rush of elation. Her mother had been in the apartment. Her breath, her dirty, pretty smell still hung in the air. Marjorie never got angry about the thefts. She'd just stand, hands on hips, facing the emptiness, and inhale deeply as if acquainting herself with the new geography of her life.

But when Candy was ten, and she and Marjorie returned from the grocery store to find that Marjorie's black Singer Featherweight, the hand-me-down from her mother and grandmother that she had oiled and massaged and kept going for years, was gone, she went to her bedroom and didn't come out until the following morning. Candy poured herself a bowl of Frosted Flakes and sat on the couch waiting for Marjorie to show her, as she always did, how to skirt this new boulder in her life, but she didn't open her door.

"Are you mad?" Candy asked the next morning, when Marjorie finally came out of her room, her face blotchy.

Marjorie fingered the thin pages of the phone book, looking for the number of a locksmith. "I'm just tired," she said softly. Two weeks later, Marjorie held Candy's hand at the kitchen table as they listened to Sylvie struggle to turn her key in the front-door lock.

"I know you're in there!" Sylvie yelled, pounding on the door.

Candy looked at Marjorie, who held her finger to her lips, and the two sat in rigid silence. Giving up on the door, Sylvie came to the kitchen window. She pressed her pallid and wild-eyed face up to the glass so that her nose and lips flattened and distorted.

"Let her in, Grandma. Please," Candy said.

"We don't want any visitors just now," Marjorie said.

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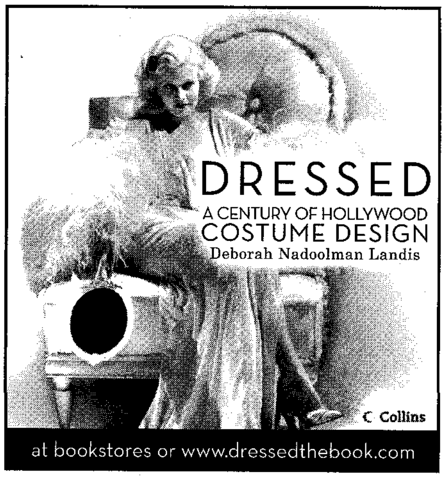
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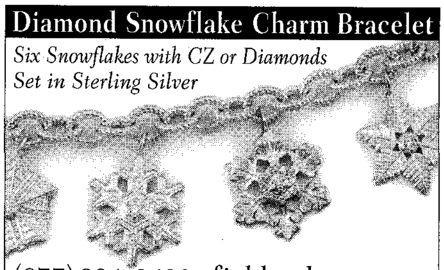
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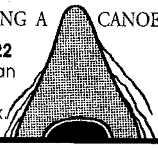

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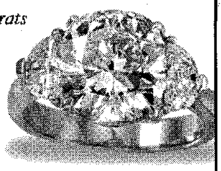

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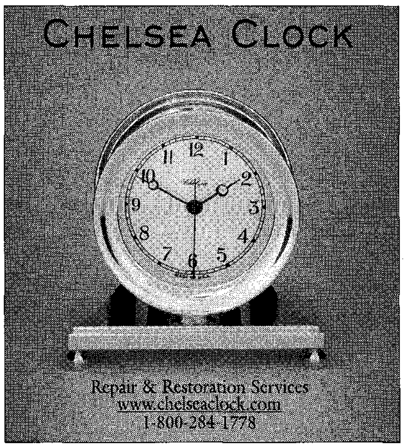
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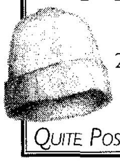

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death, Candy often had the feeling of being shadowed, as if a huge prehistoric bird were passing over her, but when she looked up there was nothing there.

El Lobo had his eyes closed when Candy brought in his breakfast the next day, but she knew he wasn't asleep—there was something too effortful about his breathing. Noisily, she set up the tray table and dragged her chair to the side of his bed. When he finally opened his eyes, he stared, again, at the opposite wall. This time, she did not feed him but simply sat and waited for him to say something. He did not move or shift his gaze. The air in the room stiffened with tension, but neither one gave in. After ten minutes, she rolled the table away from the bed and took the uneaten food from the room. In the hallway, she met up with Tammy, the floor nurse.

"What happened?" Tammy said, eying the uneaten food.

"He's not hungry."

"He said this?" Tammy said, warily.

"He made it clear."

"He spoke?"

"He wasn't hungry," Candy repeated. "I'm not supposed to force-feed."

"Well," Tammy said, considering, "did you mark it down?"

Candy nodded. "Zero in. Zero out."

"It's bath time, anyway. Give me some help."

After gathering supplies and filling a small bowl with warm water, Candy came back into El Lobo's room. Tammy leaned over the bed and pulled El Lobo toward her. "Candy, get the tie," she said.

Candy put down her supplies and came around the bed. She saw El Lobo's dark skin where the hospital gown split open in the back. A fine down feathered away from his spine. She resisted the urge to touch that fur. She undid the tie and watched while Tammy gently laid El Lobo back against his pillows, then drew the gown down past his shoulders and chest. The dressing covering the wound where his arm had been was secured by white bandages that stretched across his breastbone, contrasting with his dark skin and his nearly black nipples.

"We're just going to do a little spa treatment!" Tammy said loudly. "How's that?"

El Lobo said nothing and Tammy chattered on, explaining that they would not be taking off his dressing but would just wash around it to freshen him up, and that the doctor would be in later to see how he was doing, and wasn't he doing well, Candy? Good color in his face. Like he'd been to the beach! Have you been sneaking out of here and hitting the beach? Ha-ha-ha. All the while she sponged his chest, neck, and face, and then, reaching down under the blanket with the warm cloth, her head turned to the side as if to control her urge to look, Tammy cleaned him off below. Candy doled out fresh, damp cloths and took away the used ones, then held a bowl under El Lobo's mouth while Tammy brushed his teeth. Spit! Good one! Spit again! They dressed him in a clean gown. Hello, gorgeous!

Candy knew just what El Lobo, with his pliant body and immobile gaze, was up to. She felt a warm rush of anger start in her stomach and rise into her throat. She wanted to hit him. She wanted to hear him react.

"Candy. We have a situation here."

Candy looked over and watched as a stain spread across the sheet covering El Lobo's lower half.

"That's just a normal thing, honey," Tammy said to El Lobo. "You get that warm water down there and it makes you want to go, right?"

She began to remove the wet sheet covering El Lobo, but her beeper went off. She checked the readout and handed the sheet to Candy. "I'll call for an orderly," she said, and left the room.

Candy looked at El Lobo, whose head was turned away. She left the room, threw the dirty sheet in the laundry chute, and got a clean gown and fresh bedding from the supply closet. She looked down the hall for the orderly, but no one was coming. She waited next to El Lobo's door. After a few minutes, the orderly still had not come, and Candy was angry. Angry at the hospital for making her take care of this when it was not part of her job, angry because El Lobo had to lie there in his own piss and stink. She moved to the bed, thinking that she would change his tunic first. That would be easy enough to do alone, and by the time she was done the orderly would have arrived. But then she realized that if she did not change the bottom sheet first, his new gown would become wet, and she'd have to do the whole thing over again. So carefully, as if handling some-

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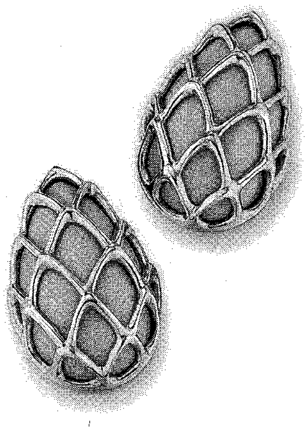

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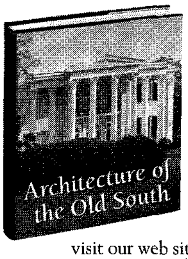

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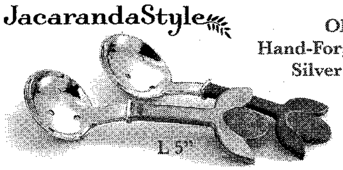

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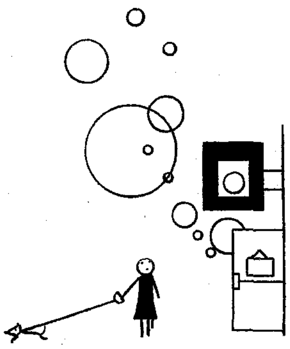
thing breakable, she rolled El Lobo onto his good side. He was heavier than she expected a person with most of his body missing to be, and he did nothing to help her. When she stopped pushing, he fell back rather than staying on his side. Her frustration with him and his intransigence welled up and she was thinking of leaving, letting him lie in his own mess until the orderly arrived, when she noticed that his eyes were not simply closed but squeezed shut, like those of a child playing hide-and-seek.



Carefully, she pushed him onto his side again, this time bracing herself against his back as she inched the sheet out from under him. It was hard work, but she was careful not to make any sounds that would allow him to sense her frustration. She reached for a wet towel and quickly swiped it across the mattress, then shook out a clean sheet and managed to slip it underneath him just as he was becoming too heavy for her to hold where he was. She laid him back down and walked around the bed, working the sheet until it lay reasonably flat. Next, she undid his tunic and pulled it from his body. She plunged a washcloth into the bowl of now lukewarm water and gently cleaned him off. She wiped around his belly and his groin, reached under him to get at his backside. His soft, pale penis lay against his thigh, as bald as a newborn puppy, but she did not take her eyes away. This was his body. It deserved to be seen. She dressed him in a fresh gown, holding him against her chest as she tied the strings. She knew that she could not hold him by the shoulders to lay him back against his pillows because of his pain there, so she kept her arms around his ribs and leaned him all the way down as if she were embracing him. When she pulled away, his eyes were open, and she saw, for a brief second, the arrow of his hatred for her and for everything that had happened to him bending back on itself and aiming straight into his own heart.

Marjorie was sewing at the machine when the power went out. It was ten o'clock at night, and the darkness was sudden and blinding. For a moment, both Candy and Marjorie froze where they were in the living room.

"Oh, shoot. I'm just in the middle of something, too," Marjorie said, finally. "Get the flashlights."

Candy felt her way down the hall and into the kitchen, struck by how frightening real darkness was. For a brief moment, she felt panic rise up in her. What if the power never came back on? What if they all had to grope around in this darkness forever? She turned on the flashlights and brought them into the living room, glad to be near her grandmother again.

"It's getting hotter already," Marjorie said.

Candy opened the windows to the courtyard, but when she went to the other side of the room to open the street windows for a cross breeze Marjorie stopped her.

"Thieves," she said. "They just wait for times like this."

Candy could already feel sweat forming in the creases of her underarms and beneath her breasts. She took one of the flashlights and trained it on the thermostat.

"It's already eighty in here."

Marjorie went to her machine and slid the material out from under the foot. "I guess I'll have to do this by hand if I'm gonna be finished in time. Shine that light over here."

Candy stood above Marjorie and trained her flashlight onto the pearly white material. She watched as her grandmother struggled to thread a needle with fingers that were beginning to bend at odd angles, like old trees.

"I need glasses," Marjorie said, missing the eye of the needle and wetting the tip of the thread between her lips.

"Want me to do it?" Candy offered.

"I can thread my own needle, thank you. Been doing it half my lifetime."

She was successful on the next try, drew the thread out, and tied a knot at the bottom. She adjusted the material on her lap. Candy watched as Marjorie attempted to work the needle through the material in the seed-size stitches required for the seam she was sewing. The stitches were uneven, and Candy waited for Marjorie to stop, or get out her seam ripper, but she continued, her breath coming hard out of her nose as she pursed her lips. Candy felt heat rise in her face as she watched her grandmother's awkward, determined work.

"The power will probably come back on soon," Candy said, trying to keep her voice neutral.

"And if it doesn't? I've got a bride here who's not gonna care about my excuses if her dress isn't ready in time."

Candy tried to imagine the bride that her grandmother could see in this material bunched up on her lap. Was she short, tall? Full-breasted or flat? Was her grandmother conjuring up a beauty when the reality was far different?

"What's she like?"

"Who?"

"The bride."

"They're all the same, you know. Just girls. They don't know what's happening to them. Oh! Oh!"

Candy saw the spot of red and snatched the cloth off her grandmother's lap before the blood could spread any farther on the material. She reached for her grandmother's hand. "Don't move," she said. "I'll get a Band-Aid."

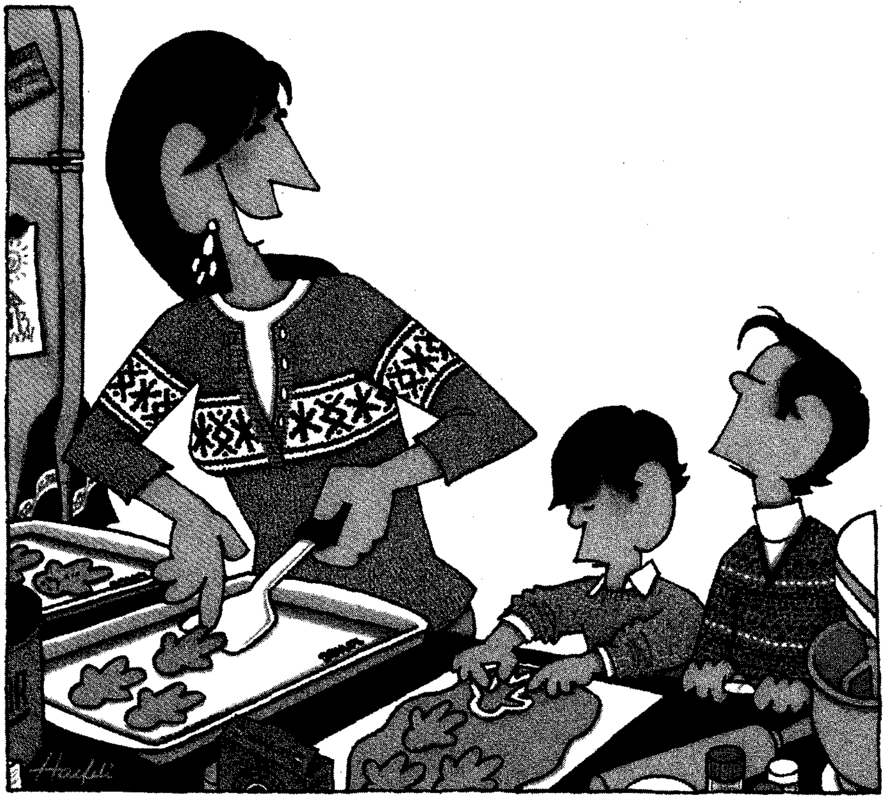
When she returned from the bathroom, Marjorie was standing and holding the wedding dress out in front of her with her good hand so that it fell into its bodiless shape.

"It's pretty," Candy said.

"It's beyond repair."

It was impossible to sleep. Even with the windows open, the bedroom was close, the heat making it almost hard to breathe. Candy lay on top of her covers, her arms and legs spread out so that her skin didn't chafe. Marjorie's bedroom door opened, and Candy listened as her grandmother went into the bathroom, then she got up quickly. If she was quiet, perhaps she could catch her grandmother turning on the water. But as her hand touched the doorknob she stopped herself and sat back down on her bed.

—"Get out! Get out! *Come on, now!*" she heard her grandmother say, in the gentle, forgiving tone she'd used when she bathed Sylvie or when Candy touched her material with dirty hands, as if their transgressions didn't really bother her at all, as if she were grateful for the intrusion. ♦



"You know, statistically speaking, at least one of these gingerbread men is gay."

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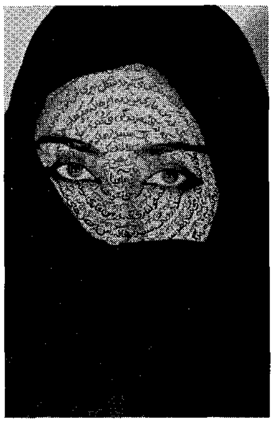

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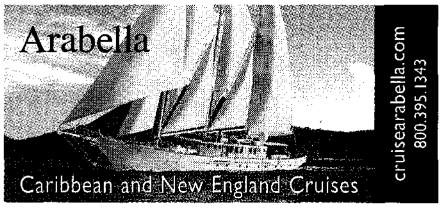

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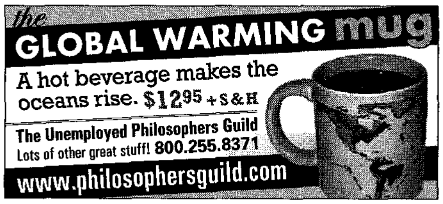

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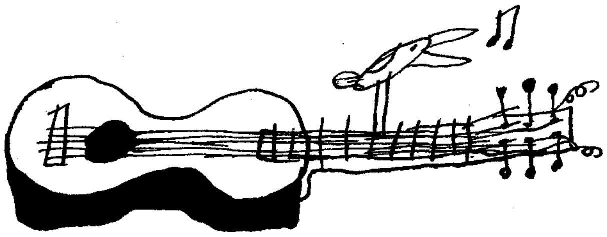


A CRITIC AT LARGE

RED, WHITE, AND BLEU

What do we eat when we eat meat?

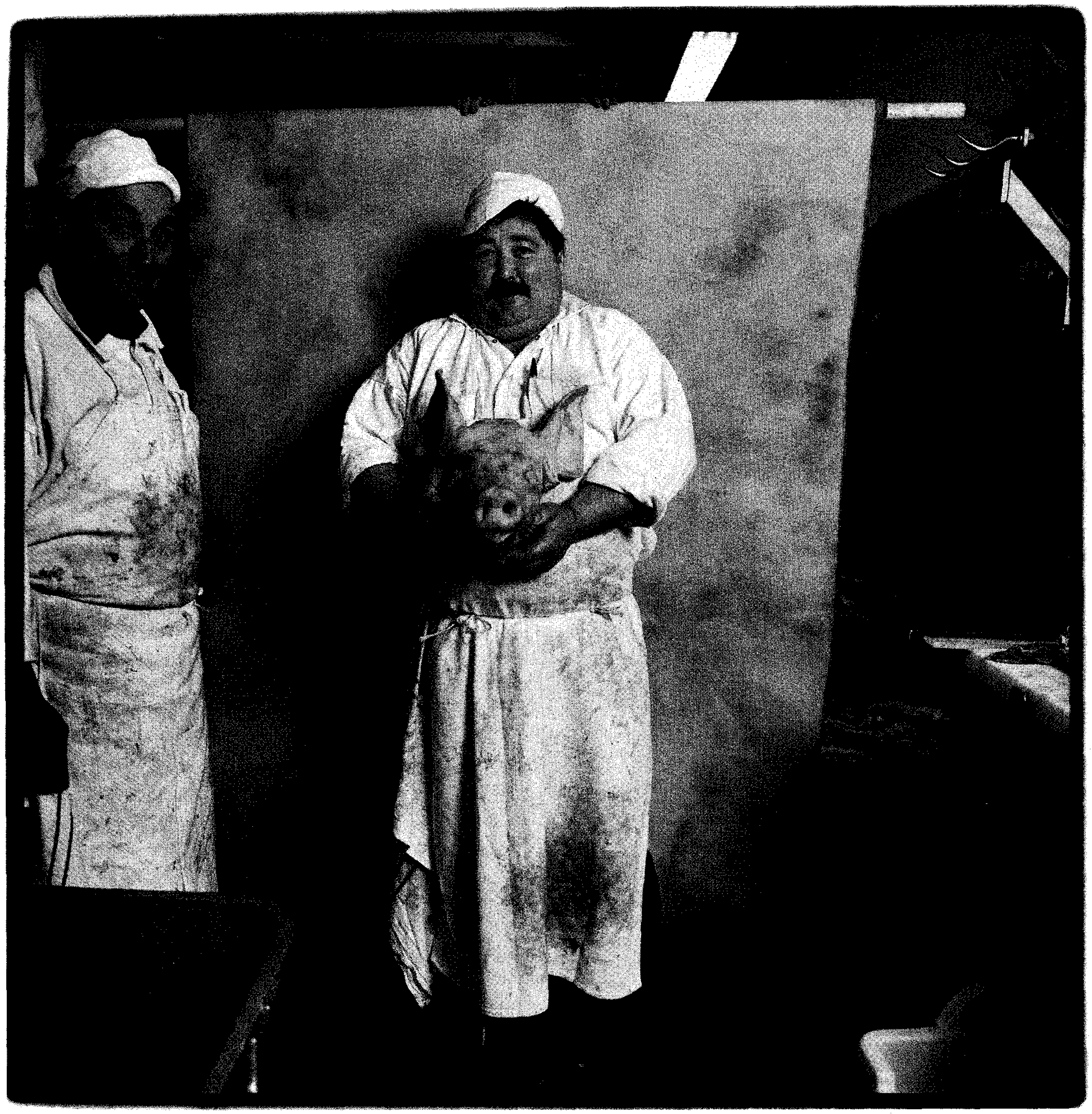
BY BILL BUFORD

Is it possible that meat is now openly enjoying a renaissance—that it's finally cool to be a carnivore? If so, it has been a long time coming. Meat-eaters, having already ceded the moral ground to vegetarians (no one has ever really come up with a persuasive rejoinder to the claim that a warm-blooded, pain-feeling creature's life shouldn't be taken for your supper), have more recently had to accept that their diet is probably the source of much of the world's heart disease and much of its obesity. That diet is also sustained by an industry that is just flat-out evil: the factory farms, the egregious economies of waste in fast food, the ghastly genetic manipulations of chickens and turkeys, the pigs raised in no-room-to-move confinement, the reckless use of antibiotics and growth hormones (as well as the frightful possible consequences—early breasting in children, difficult-to-defeat superbugs), the contamination of fields and rivers by noxious excrement runoffs from feedlots the size of small nations, the tricks and shortcuts adopted by supermarkets (cheap animals fattened on cheap grain, butchered by high-pressure hose, and packaged at their bloated maximum weight). And yet, at a time when things could not seem worse, there is a generation of people (in their forties or younger) who are thinking hard and philosophically about their food and are prepared to declare: Enough! I'm a meat-eater and proud of it! Three books by authors from three backgrounds—a farmer, a chef, and a pig-slaughtering, bacon-loving descendant of butchers—are remarkably alike in their gleeful chauvinism about being carnivores.

The farmer is Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, a British food celebrity. He is forty-two, principally a journalist and television host by trade, who wears inexpensive horn-rimmed glasses so familiar to his British audience that they are now a piece of instant anti-branding branding. The look, like his dress (muddy Wellington boots, soiled linen jacket, the mess of the occasional apron) and his long, sometimes washed, hippyish brown hair (often pictured dangling in his face and over the dishes he is preparing), conveys a no-nonsense disregard for appearances and petty courtesies and an earnest commitment to a higher truth.

This literary persona—the thinking man's amateur—was created for him by accident, in 1989, when he discovered that it was probably the only thing he could be. Unemployed after earning a "useless" degree in philosophy, politics, and economics from Oxford, Fearnley-Whittingstall had accepted a friend's invitation to apply for a job chopping vegetables at the River Café in London. The restaurant was between identities: no longer what it had started out to be (a canteen for the Richard Rogers architectural firm, next door—one of the chefs is married to Rogers) but not yet the dining destination it has since become. For twelve months, Fearnley-Whittingstall was in culinary heaven. He had never learned so much so quickly. He discovered the seasons, and their bounty, and was paid to make food from it: could things get any better? They couldn't, because he was fired. He was told that, actually, he wasn't good enough. He was disorganized, and incorrigibly messy: he was Pigpen in the kitchen. For Fearnley-Whittingstall, it was a heartbreaking moment—he'd discovered both his calling and his inability to follow it. In a variation of the pedagogical imperative (those who can't, teach), he concluded that if he couldn't make a living in the kitchen he might be able to make one writing and broadcasting about it. He embarked on a new profession, and was increasingly surprised by the passion of his convictions. He was now a man more and more committed to what he saw as the greater good: principally, food that hasn't been ruined by supermarkets (which, in his eyes, represent the single most destructive influence on the way we eat).

That commitment has now been expressed in nine television series, three specials, and ten books. One of the first, "The River Cottage Cookbook," is based on Fearnley-Whittingstall's experiences living in a house with some land, the home-away-from-home that he established in Dorset, in rural southern England, where he set out to plant vegetables and raise livestock. He started with a cow named Marge (he has since stopped naming the creatures he kills), and soon acquired enough animals never to have to buy anything but diapers and detergent from a supermarket again. "I reckon that two pigs, two lambs and a beef steer will put meat on the table about five times a week for a family of four," he writes, with the pride of a man who, at harvest's end, has met the challenges he set for himself at the beginning. He urges others to do the same: "Most of the meat we eat comes from industrially farmed animals who lead miserable lives and are fed on inappropriate diets." And though he recognizes that few people have back yards roomy enough for, say, a cow, he figures that just about everyone with a porch should be able to raise a couple of pigs. (You imagine the English suburban future with a cloud of porcine poo, like a London smog from the fifties, hanging tenaciously over the Home Counties.) "The River Cottage Year" was next, a month-by-month Christmas card of a book, with multicolored pages, progressing from green to yellow to purple, followed by Fearnley-Whittingstall's magnum opus, "The River Cottage Meat Book" (Ten Speed; $40), a five-hundred-



Two butchers (and one pig's head) in the Rungis Market, on the outskirts of Paris. Photograph by Jonathan Becker.

and-fifty-four-page effort to get down on paper every thought he has had in his work with animals as food. The cottage of the title, meanwhile, has moved to Devon, is no longer a cottage as such, and is nowhere near a river. It is a great agrarian laboratory ("Even if I don't live at River Cottage anymore, I like to think that River Cottage lives with us"), with classroom kitchens (courses include "All About Chickens" and "Hugh Cooks Christmas"), a working farm, a modest mail-order business (hemp oil, nettles soup, nettles beer, and pig-in-a-box), a greenhouse, and sheep, saddleback pigs, saddleback boar, a herd of Devon Ruby Red cattle, and some Nubian goats.

For Fearnley-Whittingstall, it seems, the most compelling meat comes from a cow, and, to this day, one of the great meals of his life is a standing rib roast he ate four years ago with his family on Boxing Day, the first that had been carved out of an animal he had fed and looked after himself. But meat from just about every other animal is discussed as well—the obvious quadrupeds, domestic and wild fowl—plus various pieces of offal, including lungs ("lights," in British butcher parlance), brains (a nightmare to extricate and, besides, one animal's taste pretty much the same as another's), and the other bits between nose and tail ("I usually have a cooked ear or two in the freezer"). Most of this is photographed—illustration is an essential feature of the book—but so, too, are the meats as they are being consumed. Fearnley-Whittingstall, it's evident, is still messy. We see a half-eaten steak, the fat congealing; a cassoulet after everyone has helped himself to it; a plate rim smeared with grease; a sideboard stacked higgledy-piggledy with dishes, cutlery, leftovers, and wineglasses cloudy from finger smudges. There is a dog: licking fat that has dripped from a table where a pig has been carved up or sitting on a bench with Fearnley-Whittingstall, having just had a bite of his homemade pork pie. Advocating the flavors of bird jelly—the juices that set after a chicken has been cooked—Fearnley-Whittingstall tells us about the happy "discovery" of the roasting pan "a day or so later" and eating up its unwashed, solidifying, crusty remains. I found myself wondering, Doesn't anyone do the dishes down there at the cottage? Fearnley-Whittingstall's occasional efforts to explain butchery, like boning a leg of lamb (encouraging his readers not to bother with a professional but to do the "hatchet job yourself—it's quite easy to improvise"), reveal a tolerance for chaos ("It's a bit tricky to explain") that may be without precedent among people who make a living from preparing food.

For all the disarray, there is a coherent ideology. It is evident in the opening pages, an eleven-photograph sequence that shows the author taking two cows to slaughter. The pictures are not sensational, but they are unflinching. The first is of the animals boarding a trailer, the floor covered with hay, backed up against a corral (a dirt road, a wooden gate, early-summer foliage, a green-diffused light, Fearnley-Whittingstall, in his familiar Wellies, coaxing them along). Then: a captive bolt gun pressed against the top of an animal's head. Then: the animal on its side on a concrete floor, collapsed, blood starting to pool. It is raised by its hind legs and hung upside down to drain blood. It is skinned, a thick white fat being peeled off the body in a single rug piece. This is followed by a tug-of-war removal of the unwieldy, instantly expanding intestines, like a white plastic trash bag filled to bursting, and the sawing of the carcass in half, the moment when conventional butchering begins. There is little accompanying text, apart from a rhetorical aside: Why is it considered entertainment when a predator kills another animal in a wildlife film, Fearnley-Whittingstall wonders, "whereas the final moments of human predation of our farmed livestock are considered too disturbing and shameful to be made available even for information." The reader understands the point. Meat comes from an animal—a banal connection that has been obscured by the way supermarkets prepare and present our food—and the animal has to be killed. If you fear the sight of a carcass, you shouldn't be eating from it.

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hummingbird feeder
where the cats can't get it

long brake light occluded in billowing exhaust
in the chill predawn fog of a final
wish in the world,

and the sun rising through it.

—*Richard Kenney*

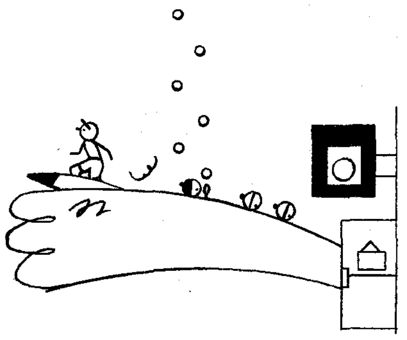
This opening sequence informs the rest of the book, implicitly posing the question: Is the meat you're eating good enough to justify killing an animal? (Sometimes I wondered if the author wasn't a closet vegetarian, after all.) The question also seems to have informed Fearnley-Whittingstall's winningly capricious life, the way his desire to know more about what he was eating led him to experiment with one animal, then a dozen, then a farm, then a bigger farm, without any sense of limits. Who knows what will be next? The author doesn't. That author, at least as he presents himself in these pages (where his sentences sound as though they had been screamed into a microphone while being filmed during a gale), is manifestly a passionate, good-hearted slob of a philosopher, distinguished overwhelmingly by his skepticism. Our meat has been ruined by the people who produce it: How can you believe them? Trust no one! Find out for yourself. And the book's satisfactions are not in its many meat preparations (including steak-and-kidney pie, Lancashire hot pot, beef in stout, shepherd's pie, and a version of sausages in batter called Flying Toad in the Hole with posh gravy—each a revival effort and each definitively without appeal) but in the glimpses of the author amid his own farm animals, prepared to test every received opinion about meat and how you cook it. Why do people baste birds? he asks. It's useless, crisps up only the skin, and doesn't penetrate beyond it. Why do cows eat so much grain if it isn't good for them? A cow, he then discovers, will eat virtually anything, its passivity being the reason it has been so successfully domesticated, and abused. (Scientists have found that feral cows return to eating grasses, the diet of their genetic forebear, the aurochs, and one that their digestion is designed to accommodate. Grass-fed beef, a rarity in the United States, is healthier, better-tasting, more exercised, and has superior marbling—the integrated development of fat in the animal's tissues—than grain-fed, but requires more land than do animals in a pen.) Are testicles worth eating? Yes! What happens when you remove fat from two kinds of meat? They taste almost the same. Why does store-bought beef exude water when you cook it? Because it is (a supermarket trick) wet-aged rather than dry-aged, making it heavier, but less good. Where can you age meat? Anywhere that's cool—on a rack in your refrigerator, a pantry, a porch in December (or a New York fire escape in winter, I discovered, after leaving a wild turkey on one for eight days). How do you roast a pig on a spit? Fearnley-Whittingstall tried, and characteristically botched a half-dozen animals before finally nailing the technique, and, in the event of your ever having to cook one, you will want a copy of his book nearby.

The chef is Martin Picard, forty-one, a French-Canadian, native of Montreal, round and pudgy-soft with curly, dark, unkempt hair, a scraggly beard, and a rug of chest hair, and the proprietor of what might well be the most immoderate, unreservedly unhealthy eating establishment in North America, Restaurant Au Pied de Cochon. Picard's book, "Au Pied de Cochon," is not a book, exactly, but an "album": it has no acknowledged author but, rather, a list of recipe writers, photographers, an illustrator, and an interviewer on a copyright page; no title but only a logo; and no conventional publisher, having been "produced" in both French and English editions by Picard himself. It is an unabashed celebration of meat and animal excess and the commitment to filling up your stomach to stay warm during winter nights: a hymn to saturated fats. There is no cookbook like it, because its aim is to represent—with cartoons and wacky biographical sketches of suppliers and step-by-step picture instructions of one improbably meaty, glisteningly unctuous dish after another—the buzz and magic and self-destructive aura of a restaurant that is like no other. You look at the menu and think, You don't go there to eat; you go there to die.

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall expressed a hope that, one day, chefs would learn to butcher again and buy the whole animal, which they would be compelled to cook in new ways. (Restaurants get venison fillets, pork tenderloins, and rib-eye steaks in individual shrink-wrapped packages, and prepare them within a predictable range of variations.) Picard hasn't needed the encouragement. He makes black puddings and trotters, and a round, bloated piggy stomach served—in a surf-and-turf pairing inspired, no doubt, by some Newfoundland fisherman with animals running around his porch—in a lobster sauce. He prepares venison tongue three ways: with a tarragon sauce, in a pot-au-feu, and pickled. He sensibly uses pork stock in many dishes, though it's an ingredient you almost never see in cookbooks. His fatback is fried and served in a paper cone. He does unspeakable things with foie gras: using it in hot dogs, pizzas, hamburgers, or as a giant, door-stopping wedge atop French fries, melted-cheese curds, and a "gravy" made with pork stock, egg yolks, cream, and even more foie gras. (The dish, a local favorite called poutine, may sound disgusting; I've eaten it and can attest that it is much worse than it sounds.) Picard is not high-end. His genius, according to Anthony Bourdain, who has written an introduction, is in his recognition that "now, right now, is the perfect time to give the whole world of fine dining the middle finger."

In fact, his middle-finger salute is directed not only at the world of fine dining but also at vegetarians, animal-rights defenders, anti-gun lobbyists, and anyone opposed to the killing of animals. Picard is not earnest. He is cheeky and provoking. The book opens with a photograph of him in a boxer's stance (the gloves, the trunks), in the restaurant's meat cooler, ten carcasses hanging from meathooks, where he is squaring off against a dead pig before an audience of his bare-chested male staff, sitting in deck chairs, wearing sunglasses and swimsuits (and surely freezing). It ends with Picard in the woods, squatting in an outhouse, and reading the volume we have in our hands. In between, there are various photos, all of them irreverent, with animals or creatures as props: of two men wearing sea urchins like sunglasses, or pig heads arranged in a vat of boiling water so that they seem to be screaming, open-mouthed, in pain, or freshly killed birds in a mock courtship. At a time when animals are abused by industrial farmers, manipulated, mismanaged, malnourished, and generally disrespected, this sort of thing is akin to a hunter's putting a cigarette in the mouth of the just-shot trophy buck and taking a picture. Like Fearnley-Whittingstall, Picard depicts animals being killed and gutted, but his images are more confrontational and involve considerably more blood and a blade he wields himself. "Whether you uproot a carrot and bite into it, or slaughter a deer and cut it into steaks," he writes, "it should be remembered that each effort to procure food is inherently tinged with violence: it is the passage from life to death, and back again towards life."

Picard is not, however, an uncritical meat-eater. Like Fearnley-Whittingstall, he has a particular fondness for game: the least ruined of all animals—meat before it was corrupted by the unnatural selection of livestock cultivation. (Our meat is determined largely by what an animal eats—breed is a very minor consideration—and a wild animal is likely to have the least manipulated diet of all.) Picard knows that his love for pigs, the animal traditionally used in many Québécois preparations, is potentially problematic, because of the abuses in the pork industry. But he is also convinced that bad meat comes from animals that have been badly raised; that you find good meat by finding good producers of it and patronizing them. He gets his pigs from François Pirson's farm in nearby Saint-Grégoire. He gets his chickens from Jean-Pierre Clavet in Yamachiche. The approach is one that all of us can follow. Find good suppliers—downtown, in the next town, by mail order, or on the Web—get to know them, and stick by them. You should always know the first name of the person you buy your meat from. Picard rarely offers beef in his restaurant, because he has yet to find a producer he trusts.



The butcher, Stéphane Reynaud, forty, is a butcher not by trade but by upbringing, being the nephew and grandson of butchers in the village of Saint-Agrève, on the Ardèche plateau, in southern France. He now runs a restaurant just outside Paris that specializes in pork, but he is always home for the annual slaughtering and butchering of a pig in winter. Although European Union regulations (as well as the practices of modern hygiene) prohibit butcher shops from killing anything on the premises—only certified slaughterhouses are authorized to kill an animal—the annual pig slaughter in a small hilltop village goes largely undetected. The event gives Reynaud a chance to reminisce about a pig killing thirty-three years before, when, accompanying his grandfather to a local farm, he sat on the imitation leather seat of his truck and witnessed for the first time the festivities surrounding the event. The temperature then, as now, was considerably below freezing. The pig then, as now, weighed four hundred pounds, and produced six and a half feet of blood sausages, sixty cooking sausages, fifty cured sausages, fifty Ardèche sausages, forty-four pounds of pâté, eighteen pounds of roasting pork, two cured hams,

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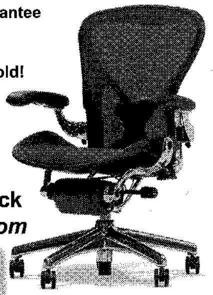

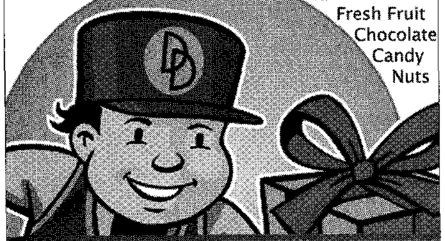

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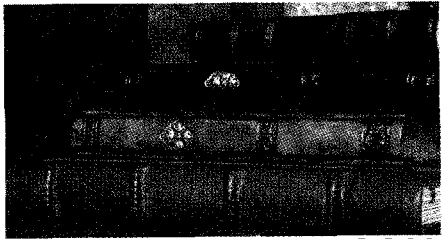

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and two pork bellies. The only difference between the two occasions is in the beverage: eight glasses of wine for Reynaud today; two cups of hot chocolate for the seven-year-old, plus a late-morning snack of sliced bread with butter. But the bounty of the pork preparations—from the blood sausages to the bellies—gives the book its structure. "Pork & Sons" (Phaidon; $39.95) is the story of killing a pig—the kind of killing that has been done every year for a very long time—and the many things you can then eat afterward, and it is distinguished by an unusual tranquillity of purpose.

In this respect, it is different from the Picard or the Fearnley-Whittingstall. It is a cookbook, showing you the five, or ten, or sometimes twenty recipes for each category of pig-slaughter preparation: autumn fruits (apples, quinces, pears, and a splash of Calvados) with your blood sausages, for instance, or in a tart made with fennel—ingredients that might still be available when your blood sausages have just been made. Or summer ingredients—arugula, say, or sun-dried tomatoes—for the hams, because a properly cured ham needs some time and you wouldn't touch one before then. But there are affinities among the three books. Reynaud, too, includes a photograph of an actual slaughter, although it is minuscule, the details barely visible, along with one of the bloodletting: he, too, seems to recognize that we're losing our connection to our animals. The way he addresses the issue of quality is remarkably understated and telling. "You don't get good hams without good pigs," he writes—it's his only instruction—and the implication is that, if you don't know what a good pig is, you know enough to find out. His book is written in the quiet confidence that you will be reading it only if you are interested not just in meat but in the whole animal it comes from.

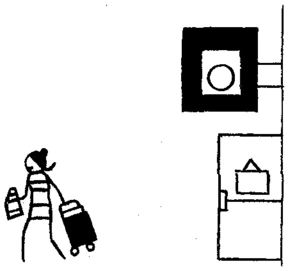
About halfway through my reading, I stopped. The book had made me want to cook what it was describing. What I then purchased—trotters, knuckles, a shank, the belly—now seems absurd. You don't go shopping for leftovers; I should have bought a whole pig. Other preparations, consisting of the animal's more conventional parts, made more sense: a shoulder stewed with Venetian-trader ingredients (dates, apricots, saffron, and cinnamon), or one cooked as a confit and served with grapefruit and preserved lemon. I still haven't done anything with the recipes for feet and ears—clever ways of making something out of very little—but noted them, because you never know when you might need them.

My only disappointment was in a piece of neglect for which the publisher is probably to blame. It is also evident in the Fearnley-Whittingstall. All these books, recognizing our supermarket-induced ignorance, make an exaggerated, outsized effort to teach us the cuts. This, Picard tells us, is what a pork loin looks like, and he shows us a photograph. These are the twenty-seven famous cuts of beef, Fearnley-Whittingstall tells us in the British edition of his book, and he includes precise pictures, along with a diagram illustrating exactly where each one comes from. These are all important cuts in a pig, Reynaud tells us in the original French edition, and sets them out in a series of perfectly detailed cartoons. In the American edition, though, Fearnley-Whittingstall's twenty-seven cuts have been replaced by a blocky, useless diagram of seven sections of a cow: it teaches us nothing, and serves only to compound our ignorance. In Reynaud's American edition, there are, incomprehensibly, three illustrations of the loin, each vague and each different from the others. In the recipes, the various treatments of the shoulder are reduced to a Boston Butt, that obscure piece of American pig butchering, which is not a whole shoulder but only the fatty top part of one. (Frankly, I had no idea what a Boston Butt was, having assumed that it came from the rear.) What none of these writers acknowledges is probably something that all of them discovered right before their books were published: that there is no universal, accepted practice for cutting up an animal, that it has always been nationally and sometimes regionally determined, and that there is not, therefore, a universal set of butcher's terms that can be translated from one language to another. Maybe, in this respect, Fearnley-Whittingstall's instructions for butchering a piece of lamb are the most sensible after all: the only way you'll learn is by hacking into it, and so you may as well brave the mess. It's the first step toward understanding that meat comes from an animal, and that good meat comes only from a good animal. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

Zeroville, *by Steve Erickson (Europa; $14.95).* A giddily paranoid conceit propels this Hollywood novel: a film editor discovers that one subliminal frame has been hidden inside every movie in history. Obsessed with splicing together these occult images, he obtains the original reels of celebrated films and secretly butchers them. (Erickson slyly compares the editor's studio to the lair of a serial killer: "Five hundred or so movies have been pulled furiously from their places on the shelves, canisters ripped open and celluloid unspooled everywhere.") Unfortunately, a novel that should be a surreal corker becomes leadenly mystical. The editor, initially a menacing oddity, his head tattooed with the faces of Montgomery Clift and Elizabeth Taylor, devolves into a mouthpiece for oracular statements from the author: "The Movies were here before God"; "In film, time is round like a reel." Worse, the footage that consumes him is weirdly pallid, the kind of thing best left on the cutting-room floor.

Matrimony, *by Joshua Henkin (Pantheon; $23.95).* Toward the end of Henkin's second novel, Julian, who has just arrived at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, finds that the other students do not like his work. "The story was quiet; all his work was," Henkin writes. "He had nothing against muscular prose; it was the flexing of those muscles that he objected to, and, along with it, a disregard for character." The passage encapsulates Henkin's telling of the story of two couples who meet in college and quickly fall into domestic arrangements that they keep for years to come. On their path to middle age, momentous events occur, but Henkin gives equal space to the unmomentous, and everything is related in the same measured tone. Although the mundane sections tend to fall flat, when Henkin handles material with more inherent drama, like the sickness and death of one character's mother, his quiet approach pays off.



Black Mass, *by John Gray (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $24).* "Modern politics is a chapter in the history of religion," Gray, a British philosopher, insists in this outspoken attack on utopianism and the "faith-based violence" it has inspired. History, Gray writes, offers no new dawns or sharp breaks, and, from the French Revolution to the war on terror, he is as critical of the humanist belief in progress as of the "belligerent optimism" of neoconservatives. Sketching the roots of utopianism, he emphasizes the similarities between seemingly disparate movements: radical Islam, he suggests, might best be thought of as "Islamo-Jacobinism." Taking the Iraq war as an object lesson, he argues for an acknowledgment that the "local pieties of Atlantic democracy" are not the only way to govern. Gray's writing has a bracing clarity, but he tries to fit too much into his model of utopianism with too little argument.

Cavalier, *by Lucy Worsley (Bloomsbury; $29.95).* William Cavendish, poet, ladies' man, and espouser of all things chivalrous and romantic, was a Royalist general during the English Civil War, endured sixteen years of exile in Antwerp, and, returning to England in 1660, became the first Duke of Newcastle. Worsley's architectural and domestic history tells Cavendish's story through his various sumptuous homes. From a vast array of sources—blueprints and design plans, inventories and recipe books, the notes of the family doctor and Cavendish's own poetry—Worsley re-creates intimate moments in the life of the household: the sweet smell of Cavendish's morning wine, carried into his bedchamber by his maid, mingles with the "fading freshness of herbs scattered among the rushes on the floor and the whiff of the night soil"; tired groomsmen enjoy a game of dice in the Great Hall in the hours before dinner.

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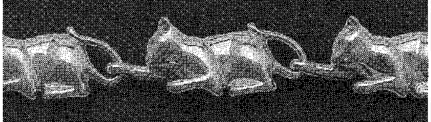

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BOOKS

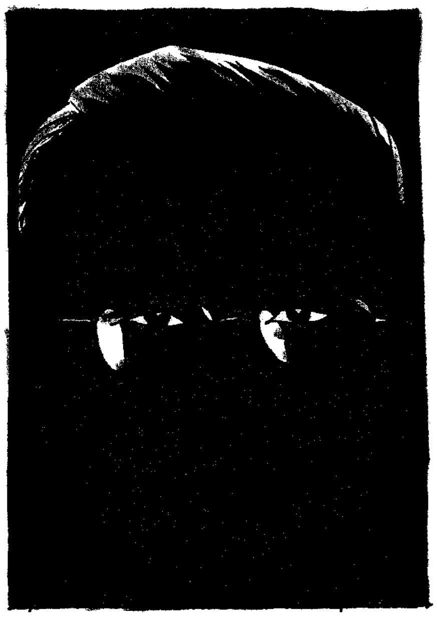
NAN, AMERICAN MAN

A new novel by a Chinese émigré.

BY JOHN UPDIKE

A critic cannot but be impressed by the courage and intellect of the Chinese-American writer Ha Jin. Born in 1956 of parents who were both military doctors, he volunteered for the People's Liberation Army at the age of fourteen and served five and a half years, near the northeast border with Russia. He began to take a keen interest in reading in his late teens, by which time the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) had closed down China's educational institutions and made any books but Mao's "little red book" suspect. In 1977, Heilongjiang University, in Harbin, admitted Ha Jin but assigned him to study English, even though it was his last choice on a list of preferences. After receiving a master's degree in American literature from Shandong University, in 1984, he came to the United States to do graduate work at Brandeis University. His plans to return to China as a teacher or a translator were changed by the Tiananmen Square massacre, in 1989: he decided to stay in America and to try to become a writer in English. A year later, he published his first book of poems, "Between Silences"; during the nineteen-nineties, he published five more volumes in English, including two collections of short stories, one of which, "Ocean of Words" (1996), won the PEN/Hemingway Award and the other, "Under the Red Flag" (1997), received the Flannery O'Connor Award for Short Fiction. His busy decade—in the course of which he was hired, in 1993, by Emory University, in Atlanta, as an instructor in poetry—was capped by a first novel, "Waiting," which received the 1999 National Book Award and the 2000 PEN/Faulkner. His prize-winning command of English has a few precedents, notably Conrad and Nabokov, but neither made the leap out of a language as remote from the Indo-European group, in grammar and vocabulary, in scriptural practice and literary tradition, as Mandarin.

"Waiting" is impeccably written, in a sober prose that does nothing to call attention to itself and yet capably delivers images, characters, sensations, feelings, and even, in a basically oppressive and static situation, bits of comedy and glimpses of natural beauty. The very modesty of the tone strengthens the reader's belief that this is how private lives were conducted amid the convulsions of the Cultural Revolution, as ancient customs worked with a fear-ridden Communist bureaucracy to stifle normal human appetites. Every simple, bleak detail has the fascination of the hitherto unknown; not a word of Ha Jin's hard-won English seems out of place or wasted. And the first-person, rather documentary prose of a subsequent prize-winning novel, "War Trash" (2004), flows as smoothly.



Ha Jin

JACQUES DE LOUSTAL

His new novel, "A Free Life" (Pantheon; $26), is a relatively lumpy and uncomfortable work, of which a first draft, he confides in a brief afterword, was completed in the year 2000. In an interview that same year, with Bookreporter.com, he declared, "I plan to write at least two books about the American immigrant experience, but not my own story." However, his dedication to "A Free Life" reads, "To Lisha and Wen, who lived this book"; Lisha and Wen are the names of Ha Jin's wife and son. Nan Wu, the hero of "A Free Life," also has a wife and son, Pingping and Taotao, and shares with Lin Kong, the protagonist of "Waiting," a cautious, bookish nature and a nagging indecision in regard to a basic emotional choice. Lin, a military doctor, vacillates between a homely wife, chosen by his parents, back in his village, and a nurse in the hospital where he is posted; Nan, a graduate student adrift in America, cannot stop longing for an adored early love, Beina, who spurned him. Ha Jin, not an author averse to flat statement, spells out on an early page the dilemmas facing his hero, as he welcomes his six-year-old son to the United States:

> He was uncertain of his future and what to do about his life, not to mention his marriage. The truth was that he just didn't love his wife that much, and she knew it. Pingping knew he was still enamored of his ex-girlfriend, Beina, though that woman was far away in China. It seemed very likely to Nan that Pingping might walk out on him one of these days. Yet now he was all the more convinced that they must live in this country to let their son grow into an American. He must make sure that Taotao would stay out of the cycle of violence that had beset their native land for centuries. The boy must be spared the endless, gratuitous suffering to which the Chinese were as accustomed as if their whole existence depended on it.

As Nan's search for security takes him from Massachusetts to New York City and then to the Atlanta area, he encounters a colorful variety of Chinese expatriates and relatively native Americans, and copes with a series of lowly jobs, but the reader follows him for more than six hundred and fifty pages in pursuit of resolutions to the issues posed in the sentences above. Will Nan get over Beina? Will he start to write poetry in English? Will Pingping ever be loved by Nan as she deserves? What kind of American will Taotao become? Will the Wus get to own two cars and pay off their mortgage? It's a long trudge, but then so is assimilation.

In an interview with Powell's Books, Ha Jin said that "the core of the immigrant experience" was "how to learn the language—or give up learning the language!—but without the absolute mastery of the language, which is impossible for an immigrant." A striking typographical device conveys the inside and outside of the linguistic problem. Conversations in Mandarin are rendered in italicized English, and we observe Nan's brain and tongue functioning at a sophisticated level. When he applies to an Italian-American supervisor called Don for the job of night watchman at a factory in Watertown, we hear him speak as he sounds to Americans:

> "I worked for one and a half years at zer Waltham Medical Center, as a cahstodian. Here's recommendation by my former bawss . . . . My bawss was sacked, so we got laid all together."
>
> "You got what?" Don asked with a start. A young secretary at another desk tittered and turned her pallid face toward the two men.
>
> Realizing he'd left out the adverb "off," Nan amended, "Sorry, sorry, they used anozzer company, so we all got laid off."

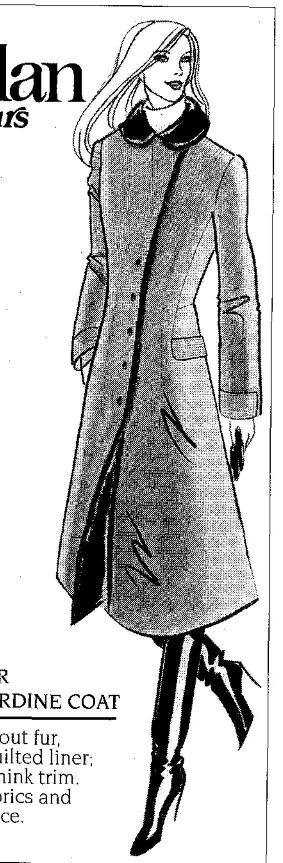
And Nan's English isn't that bad; how else do you pronounce "boss"? But he is tripped up here by a peculiarity of English that Dr. Johnson noted in the preface to his dictionary:

> There is [a] kind of composition more frequent in our language than perhaps in any other, from which arises to foreigners the greatest difficulty. We modify the signification of many verbs by a particle subjoined; as to *come off* [and] innumerable expressions of the same kind, of which some appear wildly irregular, being so far distant from the sense of the simple words, that no sagacity will be able to trace the steps by which they arrived at the present use.

Nan agrees: "Compared with written Chinese, English was indeed a language of common people, despite being hard to master, its grammatical rules too loose and its idioms defying logic." Elsewhere, becoming a handy American householder, he thinks, "Now he loved hand tools—oh, the infinite varieties of American tools, each designed for one purpose, just like the vast English vocabulary, each word denoting precisely one thing or one idea." This exacting language is "like a body of water in which he had to learn how to swim and breathe, even though he'd feel out of his element whenever he used it."

Reaching to encompass the American scene, Ha Jin's English in "A Free Life" shows more small solecisms than in his Chinese novels. We get a character "licking his compressed teeth," a tennis court "studded with yellow balls," "a giant disk [the sun] *flaming* a good part of the eastern sky," "the lobby was swarmed with people," a victim of violence "booted half to death," eyes that "shone with a stiff light like a crazed man's," a "hilly gravel road filled with doglegs," a swimmer "crawl-stroking to the shore." Complicated facial maneuvers challenge our ability to visualize: "Unconsciously she combed her upper lip with her teeth"; "His eyebrows were tilting as he kept pushing his flat nose with his knuckle"; "His eyes turned rhomboidal and his face nearly purple." Metaphorical overload can occur: "In his arms, she was like a meatball with love handles." Some expressions feel translated from the Mandarin: Pingping says, "You shouldn't have mixed our decision with his fault," and Nan thinks, "If his wife had been of two hearts with him, this family would have fallen apart long ago." Rare words wander in from the hinterlands of the English dictionary: "a short-haired barmaid in a lavender skong," "It was mizzling," "empleomaniac." Taotao's vocabulary has grown to the point where he exclaims, in the midst of a family tussle, "Ow! Don't break my humerus!" Anxiously, Nan keeps seeking verdicts on his use of English: one consultant pronounces it "fluid, elegant, and slightly old-fashioned," whereas another, an editor of a little magazine called *Arrows*, testily tells him, "The way you use the language is too clumsy. For a native speaker like myself, it almost amounts to an insult."

Unfortunately, the novel rarely gathers the kind of momentum that lets us overlook its language. The processes that Ha Jin is concerned to describe—survival and adjustment in an alien land, the firming-up of a literary vocation, the emergence of marital and family harmony after the shocks of transplantation—are incremental, breaking into many small chapters but yielding few dramatic crises. The central action consists of the Wus' decision to buy a small Chinese restaurant, the Gold Wok, in a half-deserted mall northeast of Atlanta, and their recipes (foreshadowed by some knowledgeable descriptions of food preparation in "Waiting") for success. The sheaf of the fictional Nan Wu's poems at the very end is meant to serve, like Zhivago's at the end of Pasternak's "Doctor Zhivago," as the narrative's climax and triumph. Of the other Chinese literary aspirants Nan meets in the United States, he alone commits to English-language production; the others, after their overseas adventures, return to the Chinese mainland and the constraints and rewards there. One returnee, Danning Meng, achieves



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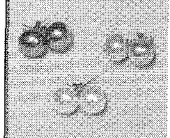

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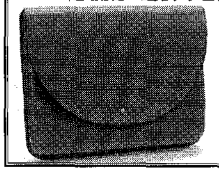


official approval and financial security, but tells Nan, when the expatriate visits:

> *The higher-ups want us to write about dead people and ancient events because this is a way to make us less subversive and more inconsequential. It's their means of containing China's creative energy and talents. The saddest part is that in this way we can produce only transient work.*

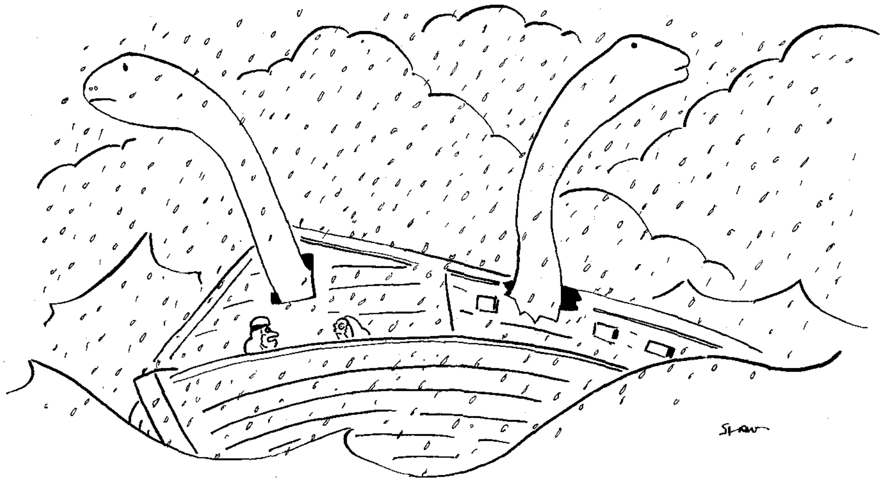
Bao Yuan, who employs Nan for a time on his short-lived Mandarin quarterly in New York, *New Lines*, becomes a painter and makes an American splash, establishing himself in a studio near Nashville with students and a rich patron, but Nan, nothing if not critical, "could find little originality in these paintings" and distrusts the American sunniness and exuberance that have replaced Bao's old "depressive agitation, the jaundiced view of the world, and the dark despair." Sure enough, Bao's paintings bring less and less money, though he turns them out ever faster. When last seen, he has taken a Chinese bride, a factory owner's daughter, and cranked out a series of bad paintings of Shanghai: "Obviously Bao, cashing in on his success, had diffused his energy and lost his creative center. This troubled Nan." Not that Nan's American friend, the poet Dick Harrison, is any more of an inspiration, scrambling up the rickety ladder of grants and workshops and prizes and influential acquaintances that enable ascent in a capitalist versifier's thoroughly academic career.

Ha Jin's description of American life—laborious, money-mad, philistine, and cheesy (there is apparently no cheese in China)—is not apt to trigger a wave of immigration. Asked the difference between China and America, Nan says, "In China every day I wanted to jump up and fight wiz someone. . . . Zere you have to fight to survive, but here I don't want to fight wiz anyone, as eef I lost my spirit." To himself, he thinks, "The louder I shout, the bigger a fool I'll make of myself. I feel like a crippled man here." Nevertheless, he elects to stay, in this "lonesome, unfathomable, overwhelming land." The Wus strive less to let America in than to squeeze China out—"squeeze every bit of it out of themselves!" Nan tells Danning, "*I spit at China, because it treats its citizens like gullible children and always prevents them from growing up into real individuals. It demands nothing but obedience.*"

Toward the end of "A Free Life," our hero wins, in a supermarket raffle, an airline ticket from Atlanta to Beijing and back. He visits his parents and sees signs of the new prosperity but is unmoved: "He wondered why so many overseas Chinese would retire to this mad country where you had to bribe and feast others to get anything done. Clearly a person like him wouldn't be able to survive here. Now he wanted all the more to live and die in America." The flight reminds him of his first flight, in 1985, to America, and

> how he and his fellow-travellers, most of whom were students, had been nauseated by a certain smell in the plane—so much so that it made some of them unable to swallow the in-flight meal of Parmesan chicken served in a plastic dish. It was a typical American odor that sickened some new arrivals. Everywhere in the United States there was this sweetish smell, like a kind of chemical, especially in the supermarket, where even vegetables and fruits had it. Then one day in the following week Nan suddenly found that his nose could no longer detect it.

His assimilation had begun. ♦



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IN SEARCH OF LOST TIMES

Julia Cho and Richard Maxwell play with stories from the past.

BY HILTON ALS

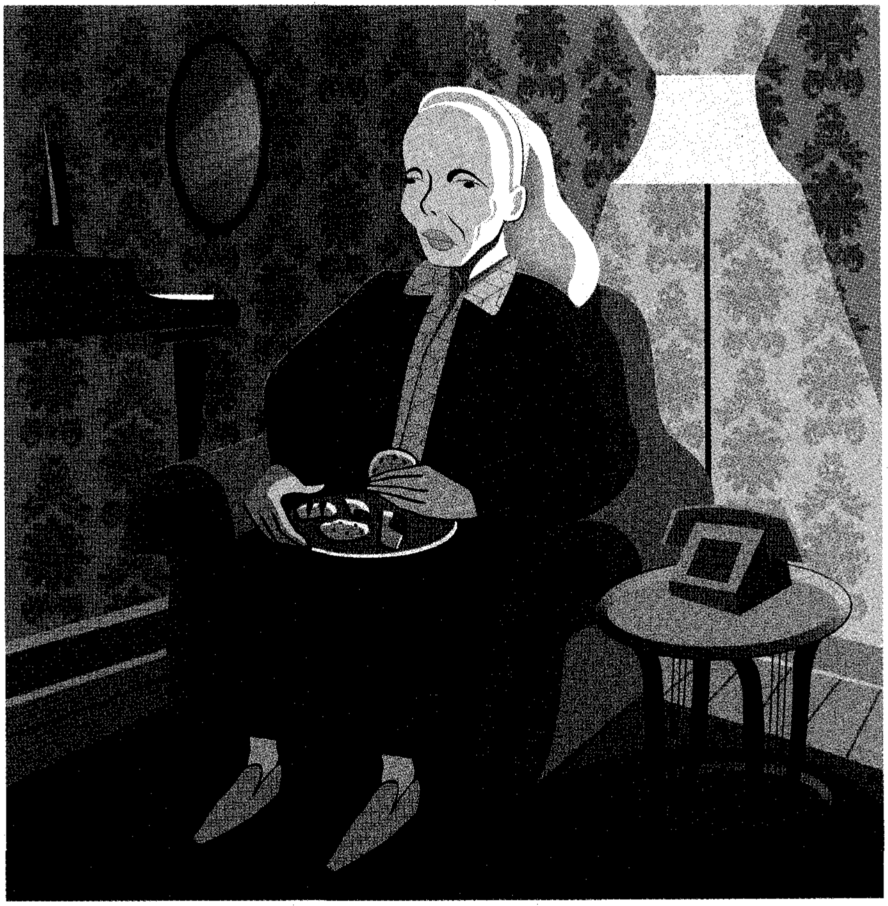
Mrs. K. (Elizabeth Franz) is an elderly widow whose powerful, selective memory is cluttered to the rafters. And since she is, for the most part, the central force in Julia Cho's well-written "The Piano Teacher" (at the Vineyard), we have to take her word for almost everything—at first. This isn't terribly difficult to do, given that Mrs. K. has such a lovely, seductive voice: it sounds like a flute floating above the babbling brook of her various reminiscences.

Sporting a pink cardigan and sensible shoes, Mrs. K. pads around her doll-delicate parlor. She doesn't have much to do, now that her husband has gone on to his glory, and she no longer offers the piano lessons that kept her occupied for a time. Munching on cookies or chocolates, watching TV, and chatting with the audience are the amiable Mrs. K.'s pastimes now. "People assume I must eat like a horse," she says near the start of the play. But she's being a little disingenuous—she's as slight as a wren. Mrs. K. adds, "Everything I eat becomes quite attached to me, so that even if all I eat is a very small piece of chocolate, well, then, that little piece of chocolate will stay with me, become part of me."

This is one of Cho's more inventive metaphors. Mrs. K. can't let anything out, not even the truth. Still, something within her—perhaps it's the sound of silence, of loneliness, that pervades her house—compels her to reach out to her former students. They're all she has, and perhaps has ever had, in this life. Naturally, the majority of them don't remember her right away; the years make strangers of us all. But Mrs. K. chirps on whenever she gets her students on the line. "You still play?" she asks. "Do you remember me?"

The director, Kate Whoriskey, does a clean, credible job when it comes to staging the telephone exchanges between Mrs. K. and her students. She does a good job, too, of minimizing the effect of the Tony Award-winning Franz's mannerisms—like many actors who don't have to share the stage much, Franz has a tendency to use her tics as a kind of armor against the audience. Whoriskey, however, draws her out at every turn, and, in response, Franz offers up a bravura performance.

And yet one can't help wondering at times why this play exists at all. While Mrs. K. is eventually forced to listen to a former student named Michael (very well played by the lyrical John Boyd), who shows up at her house one day and imparts certain truths about Mrs. K.'s husband, the drama and its revelations feel incidental, a relay race that chooses its own finish line. Nevertheless, it's during the exchange with Michael that we begin to see not only that Mrs. K.'s life has been shaped by lies but that those lies form the bedrock of her reality. This is not a new idea. And Mrs. K. is not a character we've never met before. In Truman Capote's 1945 story "Miriam," a young girl named Miriam visits a middle-aged woman who bears the same name and similarly assaults her with truths. By the end of the story, we are made to understand that both Miriams are one and the same. Are Mrs. K.'s students just different aspects of her solipsistic self? Other voices in other rooms in her empty house, which she's too frightened to explore? Cho doesn't answer these questions, nor should she. "The Piano Teacher," with its gothic mysteries, finds its triumph, finally, in dramatizing the unknown.



Elizabeth Franz as a lonely widow with secrets in "The Piano Teacher."

ROBERT RISKO

The Waiting Woman, in the writer and director Richard Maxwell's new, seventy-five-minute piece, "Ode to the Man Who Kneels" (at the Performing Garage), wears a long dark skirt with a high waistband that befits her role as a female living in the American West during the nineteenth century. Her current beau is the Dashing Man (Brian Mendes). Although the Waiting Woman (Anna Kohler) calls him an "idiot," he will not go away; his continuing presence is a testament to her charm. Whenever he gets tired of the violence in his life, he lays his heavy head on her lap and she strokes his hair lovingly. That kind of comfort is beyond language, as tender as a sigh. But, in the world that Maxwell has created here, such sentiments are the audience's projections only; he doesn't encourage his actors to indulge in them. In fact, the five-member cast speaks and sings throughout "Ode to the Man Who Kneels" with little, if any, inflection. Maxwell denies us emotional coherence because his interest lies in the disjunctions—between gesture and speech, between intention and action, between American psychological realism and the relatively cold, stilted "anti-theatre" style that the director Rainer Werner Fassbinder developed in his early works for the stage.

Once you understand that the Waiting Woman, like the other characters in "Ode," is both herself—which is to say, a figment of Maxwell's imagination—and a working actress who is projecting her real and assumed selves simultaneously, Maxwell's playful aesthetic begins to take hold. His ambition is to make theatre new. In order to do so, he has to separate himself from his fellow-experimentalists, such as Richard Foreman and the Wooster Group's Elizabeth LeCompte, both of whom have an exceptional and singular stagecraft that can seem pretty flashy by comparison. Maxwell wipes the slate clean: limited sets, a few lighting cues, simple costumes, very little hair styling and makeup. Watching him put these elements together is, I imagine, somewhat like watching the late artist Joseph Beuys construct one of his visually minimal and intellectually dense sculptures. Like Beuys, Maxwell knows enough about his discipline not to want to dress it up.

Taking our seats in the small, high-ceilinged theatre, we face a nearly empty black stage, marked only by tape on the floor, a bench, and a railing. A projectionist sits in front of the stage, illuminating it and the actors with a solid white light that throws silhouettes on the wall. The Kneeling Man (the exceptional Greg Mehrten) crouches near the Standing Man (Jim Fletcher), who holds his right hand like a gun—a gun that is cocked and aimed at the Kneeling Man's head. The Standing Man's first line is "Hello, man. You look stoopid." And we laugh, because all theatre looks "stoopid" at first—fake. Then, shifting deeper into his role as a gun-toting assassin, the Standing Man tells his victim, "Say your prayers." The Kneeling Man prays: "I'm an actor. Everything I experience in my life, everything I feel, is saying this. You know? It adds a layer to my life that I wish weren't never there. A voice in my head that says you don't count for shit, because you, what you're experiencing, you're thinking, you're counting, you're not in the real world. You're recording. You're storing up for a moment where you can use this for later." Even after he has been "shot" by the Standing Man and has fallen, dead, to the floor, the Kneeling Man joins the other actors in a song that revels in Maxwell's carnival of alienation. (Maxwell's music, which is performed on piano and guitar, is sad and slow: Hopalong Cassidy at an avant-garde ball.) Later, the Standing Man kills the Dashing Man and takes up briefly with the Waiting Woman. In Maxwell's world, no introductions are necessary; people just start talking, or arguing, or singing together.

Maxwell's formalism doesn't limit his actors, who are like the dramatic descendants of the characters in Robert Altman's 1971 postmodern Western epic "McCabe and Mrs. Miller." Watching the show two nights in a row, I could see how the German-born Kohler and Mehrten, in particular, played their own formidable technique against Maxwell's. Mehrten's five-minute monologue at the beginning of the show was like the speech of a masochist pleading for understanding at the hands of an infinitely less intelligent sadist. The Standing Man eventually turns his attention to Juny (Emily Cass McDonnell), a young woman whom the Waiting Woman considers to be her friend, and, watching Kohler, I noticed the way her eyes filled with both tears and humor as the Waiting Woman told Juny that her heart was broken. In "Ode," Kohler evokes another great German star in an altogether different kind of Western: Marlene Dietrich in "Destry Rides Again." ♦

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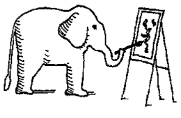

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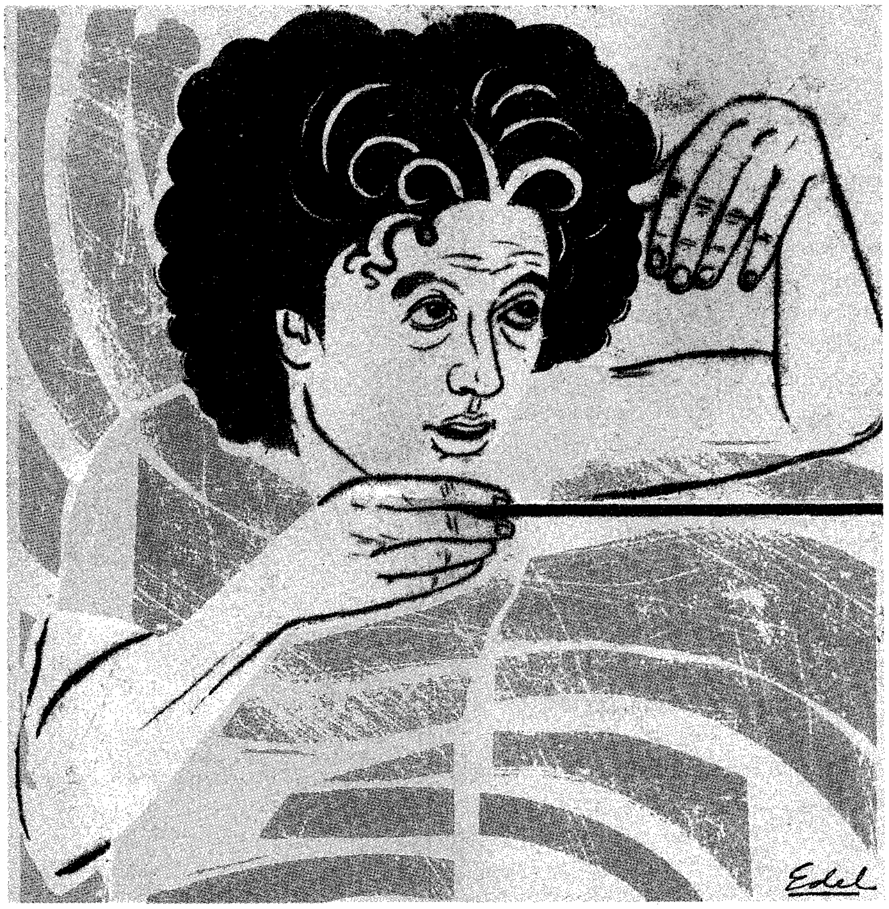
MUSICAL EVENTS

THE OUT-OF-TOWNERS

The Berlin in Lights festival at Carnegie.

BY ALEX ROSS



Gustavo Dudamel has a zeal that even hardened professionals find irresistible.

EDEL RODRIGUEZ

Berlin in Lights, a gloriously omnivorous music-and-arts festival that recently unfolded in and around Carnegie Hall, took its title from Kurt Weill's 1928 song "Berlin im Licht." In a concert devoted to the nineteen-twenties music of Weill and Hanns Eisler, the Austrian composer-vocalist HK Gruber growled "Berlin im Licht" in appropriately rough, disillusioned style, arching his eyebrows for the lines "That's no cozy little spot / That's quite a city." Indeed, it was no cozy little classical-music oasis that Clive Gillinson, Carnegie's executive director, offered New York for seventeen days in November, in his most ambitious project since arriving on the job, in 2005. We were given the burnished and burning sound of the Berlin Philharmonic, under the direction of Simon Rattle; the no less awesome sound of the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela, led by the fantastically gifted young conductor Gustavo Dudamel; cabaret evenings; an avant-garde new-music marathon; club-ready electronic soundscapes; Turkish folk music by a Berlin-based group; film screenings; literary readings; ensemble concerts in area schools; and, at the end, more than a hundred New York public-school kids dancing wildly to the Philharmonic's rendition of "The Rite of Spring." Carnegie's programmers have perpetrated many lively schemes in recent years, but nothing so raffishly radical as this.

Berlin was celebrated both as place and as ideal. In the nineteen-twenties, composers such as Weill and Eisler, in league with sympathetic musicians and bureaucrats, dreamed of bringing down the walls that had risen around classical institutions. Eisler condemned conventional concerts as "orgies of inbreeding" and urged his colleagues to depict the life of the street. The Kroll Opera, led by Otto Klemperer, presented new work and revisionist productions at reduced prices, hoping to reach the working classes. Culture functionaries touted elaborate music-education schemes. All this rhetoric still resonates today, for the classical-music ritual has evolved perilously little in the past hundred years. The revolution of twenties Berlin is still unfinished.

That mythic Berlin was destroyed many times. Hitler fatally wounded its spirit after assuming power, in 1933. Allied bombs wiped out structures that had already become mere shells. After the war, the Berlin Wall tore the city in two. The reunification of Germany has engendered what some consider an ersatz corporate city. Yet Berlin is once again seething with contrary energies, especially in its low-rent eastern districts; New York artists who can't afford to live within a five-mile radius of Times Square are migrating there. I may not have been the only New Yorker who looked on Berlin in Lights as something of a threat. It may be time—if it's not too late—for New York to protect its heritage of cultural experiment before the economy of the mega-rich turns the city into a large-scale convention center for out-of-town clients.

Simon Rattle likes to combine Mahler and the new. When he made his début as the Berlin's music director, in 2002, he conducted Thomas Adès's 1997 work "Asyla" and Mahler's Fifth Symphony. This time around, in three programs at Carnegie's main auditorium, Rattle led new works by Adès and Magnus Lindberg alongside a modern classic, György Kurtág's "Stele," and Mahler's final masterpieces: the Ninth Symphony, "Das Lied von der Erde," and the unfinished Tenth. Rattle hasn't had an easy time in Berlin; he has received a fair amount of criticism in the press, and some early concerts teetered between the inspired and the fussy. Lately, Rattle seems to have found new poise, and his latest Mahler performances were confidently plotted.

He has always been a wonderfully subtle conductor, observant of details that others gloss over. This time, the details connected. The Adagio of the Ninth was a classic Berliner tour-de-force: the extreme polish of the playing in every section created a fabulous mirage of music as three-dimensional space.

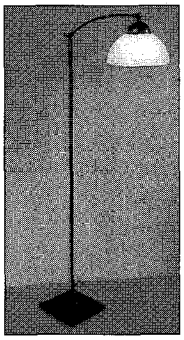
The new works held their own against Mahler's monumental valedictions. Lindberg, once a punky provocateur of Finnish music, has reinvented himself as an unrestrained sensualist, using the orchestra as a canvas for shimmering shapes and gaudy colors. His new piece, “Seht die Sonne,” takes its title from Schoenberg's early, ultra-Romantic song cycle “Gurre-Lieder,” with its C-major paean to the sun; here, a beamlike drone on C sets the music in motion, together with a swaggering, almost bluesy theme in the horns. Page after page of the score erupts in a kind of wholesome frenzy: swelling brass, trilling winds, windmilling arpeggios in the strings. There's almost an excess of sensation; it's a relief to come upon more intimate stretches, where Lindberg's love of Debussy and Ravel shines through. One brief passage for strings, in espressivo E minor, feels like a door opening onto a new lyric realm; the trouble is that it closes a little too quickly. Still, “Seht die Sonne” is the work of a master painter of sound.

In Adès's “Tevót”—the title is Hebrew for “arks,” and also for musical bars or measures—lyrical release is not a momentary digression but the final goal. Adès, the former enfant terrible of British music, has matured wonderfully as a composer; having made his name with brilliant, fiendishly difficult, often insolently ironic pieces, he now uses complicated means to express uncomplicated feelings. “Tevót” is scored for a huge orchestra of quintuple winds, five trumpets, eight horns, and so on, but there are no jokey pseudo-Wagnerisms. The landscape of the opening pages is almost nightmarish: the lower brass creep forward in pitch-black chordal vanguards, while the strings slither down like slimy rain. The chords are rooted in tonal harmony but are smeared with extra tones. The tempo quickens, the texture grows furiously dense, the percussion assert savage rhythms, chaos looms. If, as Adès says, the ark of his title connotes “the ship of the world,” it is foundering in roiling waters.

Halfway through comes a gently shocking change, one that Rattle and his players pulled off like a collective sleight of hand. The tempo slows, the texture thins, dynamics fall to a whisper. With a characteristic trick—narrow chromatic intervals in a choralelike melody widen until the tune assumes a tonal shape—Adès allows his music to fill with tentatively hopeful light. In one magical passage, the melody descends from the top reaches of the orchestra—piccolos and high violins—into the baritone and bass ranges, before a nobly arching figure in the trumpets leads the music into the stratosphere again. The work ends with lonely iterations of that trumpet statement against clangs of bells and gongs. This is majestic orchestral oratory, but it's something other than a scene of triumph; instead, lamentation has changed into a desperate prayer. The harmony of the ending can be parsed as a kind of “Amen.” The ship sails on.

If the Berliners represent the consummation of orchestral art as currently practiced, the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela gives a glimpse of a possible future: one in which classical music becomes a more diverse and popular art without any loss of distinction. The two-hundred-odd musicians in this ensemble have emerged from a singular music-education network called El Sistema, which José Antonio Abreu, a composer, conductor, and sometime politician, began building in Venezuela about thirty years ago. El Sistema now involves nearly two hundred thousand students from every sector of society. The pool of talent is deep enough to produce a world-class orchestra; this ensemble lost little in comparison with those which typically play at Carnegie, Berlin included. As it happens, there is a direct link between Caracas and Berlin: Edicson Ruiz, a member of the Berlin's double-bass section, graduated from El Sistema.

In 1999, an eighteen-year-old named Gustavo Dudamel became the music director of the Simón Bolívar orchestra. Word spread in the music world that an extraordinary new talent had arrived; Rattle called him “the most astonishingly gifted conductor I have ever come across.” Earlier this year, the Los Angeles Philharmonic signed Dudamel as its next music director, beating out several other



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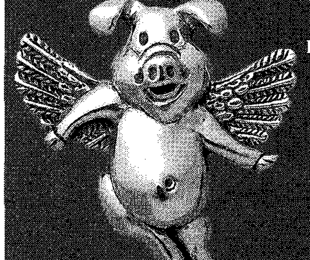

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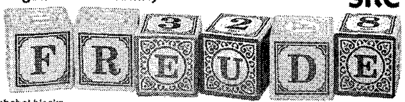

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groups that were vying for his services. The hype is intense, but it is deserved. Dudamel gives an uncannily clear beat to the orchestra; he shapes the music with a natural intelligence; and, above all, he communicates his ideas with a zeal that even hardened professionals find irresistible. I watched the Chicago Symphony fall under Dudamel's spell earlier this year; it will be fascinating to see if the New York Philharmonic responds in kind when the conductor makes his début with the orchestra, on November 29th.

With his Venezuelan players, Dudamel was a little more straitlaced in his manipulation of the beat, presumably to keep less experienced musicians on board. At the first concert, which featured Berlioz's "Roman Carnival" Overture, Chopin's Second Piano Concerto (with Emanuel Ax), and Beethoven's Fifth, both conductor and players seemed nervous; at times, the music was too wired and driven. The tension fell away the following night, when Dudamel achieved the most sensuous and vital performance of Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra that I've ever heard. The third movement turned into a lush, engulfing jungle of sound: some textures exploded around the ears (the violins' harsh fortissimo descent from D-sharp to A) while others whispered secrets (clarinet and flute spinning webs around a plaintive oboe). In the finale, the stomping rhythms coming off the stage and up from the floor had such potency that it felt distinctly strange to be sitting motionless in a concert hall: we should have been dancing.

Which the Venezuelans did, in their encores. This part of the program—which has become internationally famous, via a widely seen YouTube video—includes a selection of Latin-American-themed pieces, with the "Mambo" from "West Side Story" as the centerpiece. The players don jackets with the Venezuelan national colors and swivel around, marching-band style. Delirium inevitably ensues. I joined in, although I wondered about the wisdom of putting on such a patriotic display at a time when other Venezuelan students have been protesting Hugo Chávez's increasingly anti-democratic regime. Will Abreu's fantastic project become a propaganda tool for a dictator-in-training? History shows that when musicians trust politicians to take care of their needs they put themselves at the politicians' mercy. Stalin, too, was a great believer in music for the people.

At the end of Berlin in Lights, the Berlin Philharmonic left its midtown mansion and went up to the United Palace Theater, in Washington Heights, to participate in an education scheme called "The 'Rite of Spring' Project." This was the New York version of an initiative that Rattle launched in his first season as the Philharmonic's music director; the aim was to introduce Carnegie to kids who might otherwise never have paid it heed. In the first part of the "Rite of Spring" syllabus, schoolchildren collaboratively create a score, drawing on motifs from Stravinsky's ballet. The composers here came from the Choir Academy of Harlem, the Coalition School for Social Change, the Professional Performing Arts School, and Thurgood Marshall Academy, working under the guidance of Mary King and Catherine Milliken. They gave a gospel tinge to the melody of the "Mystic Circles of the Adolescents" and a hip-hop vibe to the rhythms of the "Procession of the Sage."

Then, after a protracted series of speeches and presentations, students from the Choir Academy of Harlem, Bread & Roses Integrated Arts High School, P.S. 153, P.S. 161, and the Harlem School of the Arts took the stage to dance the "Rite," in choreography by Royston Maldoom. The wildness of their movements—running, jumping, crouching in hunter poses, writhing on the floor in zombie style—beautifully embodied the brutal grace of Stravinsky's conception. The Berliners' performance may have lacked the usual mahogany polish, but the rough edges made it all the more effective. Simon Rattle looked intensely happy. The audience was left to decide what it all amounted to. The speechmaking, a significant lapse on Carnegie's part, may have left some with the impression that this was an elaborate photo opportunity for paternalistic musicians who would shortly go back to business as usual. But the kids couldn't have cared much about the politics. On Carnegie's Web site, Taquaisha, a sixth grader from P.S. 161, wrote, "I think the music is awesome because the music is so strong. If that music is strong, I am going to be strong." ♦

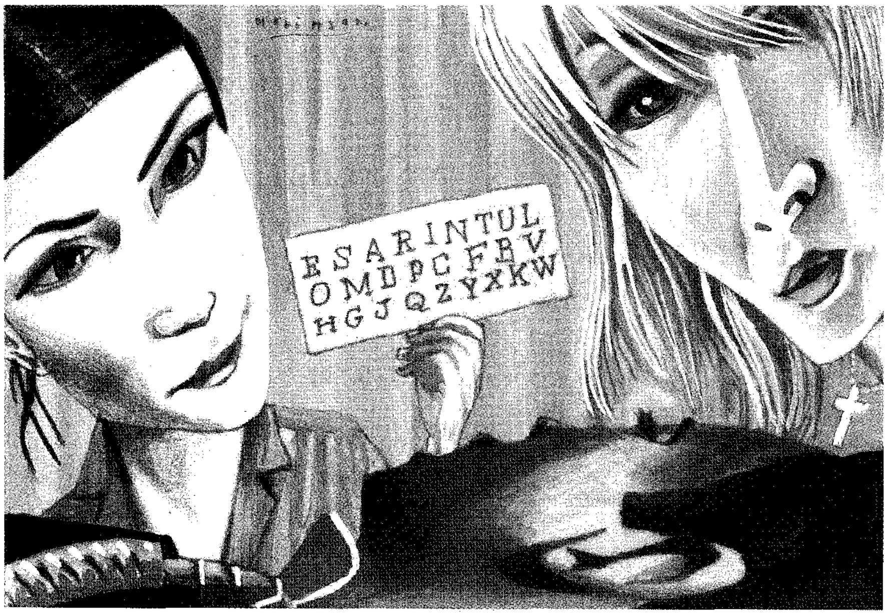
THE CURRENT CINEMA

HIGH FLIERS

"The Diving Bell and the Butterfly" and "The Savages."

BY DAVID DENBY

Most filmmakers regard subjects like illness and despair as dangerous traps—mawkish sentimentality lying on one side of the high road of art, pleasureless suffering on the other—but the challenge of an impossible subject can bring out the best in a director, and now, after Paul Haggis's mournful and touching "In the Valley of Elah," there are two more dark victories, Tamara Jenkins's "The Savages" and Julian Schnabel's "The Diving Bell and the Butterfly." The Schnabel movie is about an unlucky man—Jean-Dominique Bauby, the real-life editor of French *Elle*, who, in 1995, at the age of forty-three, suffered a massive stroke. Lying speechless and outraged in a hospital near Calais, a victim of "locked-in syndrome," Bauby (Mathieu Amalric) was restored to full mental clarity but could move nothing but his left eye. Yet Schnabel's movie, based on the calm and exquisite little book that Bauby wrote in the hospital, is a gloriously unlocked experience, with some of the freest and most creative uses of the camera and some of the most daring, cruel, and heartbreaking emotional explorations that have appeared in recent movies.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What the patient sees: Marie-Josée Croze and Olatz Lopez Garmendia.

MARK ULRIKSEN

At first, we see only what Bauby sees—a blur of faces floating into view in fearsome closeup, like deep-sea monsters. Consciousness arrives: the blurs solidify into clear images of doctors and nurses and the surprisingly beautiful décor of Bauby's cell—a turquoise-colored hospital room, with a curtain flapping in the breeze. Bauby's Cyclopean gaze swings wildly from one place to another, and visitors, embarrassed and grief-stricken, pass in and out of his vision, which operates as a kind of microscope peering into the soul of whoever comes into its view. The doctors offer diagnoses and reassurances; Bauby is caressed, shoved, lifted, held, deposited, and washed with hands both rough and gentle, and, through all this, we hear his thoughts on the soundtrack—baffled and angry at first, then bitter (he faintly enjoys the black comedy of his situation), and, finally, soulful and eloquent. Ronald Harwood, adapting the text, has made Bauby's complex internal life fully expressive, and

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Schnabel fleshes out brief descriptions of therapists and visitors into major psychological portraits. The movie, which was shot by the great Janusz Kaminski (Spielberg's cinematographer), more than fulfills the promise of the sultry early scenes in Schnabel's previous picture, "Before Night Falls." Bauby's book is concise and lyrical; the film is expansive and sensual, pungent and funny—a much larger experience. The impossible subject has yielded a feast of moviemaking.

Bauby has been reduced to a thing, an object—the ultimate patient—but the emotional and animal life in him hasn't died, and for that we are profoundly grateful. We needn't merely feel sorry for this man—unlike his caretakers and his guests, we know what's going on in his head. Schnabel neither avoids nor softens the hospital-room procedures, yet slowly the movie opens up. The camera shifts away from Bauby's limited gaze and moves to a third-person point of view that takes in everything, including Amalric's face, with its hanging lip and wandering left eye. The sight of that face—as grotesque as an image from a horror movie yet expunged of titillation—is a shock, but we quickly get used to it, and the picture moves steadily ahead on two tracks: we see the stages of Bauby's treatment, including the tortuous but productive way he learns to write; and the tumult and ecstasy of his inner life. When Bauby, liberated from terror, says, "I can imagine anything," Schnabel, in a burst of exhilaration, takes us on a speed journey through Bauby's visions and hopes and fantasies—boyhood skiing and surfing, Marlon Brando made up as Pan and horsing around (an image of something that Bauby wanted to be). Later, as Bauby begins to write his book, memories of driving with his girlfriend, her hair blowing in the wind in an open landscape, come flooding back. In the present, he's visited by his small children, who scamper around the paralyzed body on an empty beach.

Schnabel is openly emotional, and Kaminski at times approaches commercial imagery, but there's always something astringent or off-center in the moods and compositions which pulls the movie back into art. A memory of Bauby shaving his ninety-two-year-old dad (Max Von Sydow, more powerful than ever as a powerless old man) reverses the care-giving polarities, but bathos is averted by the matched vanity of loving father and loving son. After each flight, whether to the past or to a moment outside the hospital, we're sent back to Bauby, his neck askew, eye ravenously taking in the world, as he rests on a long, hauntingly beautiful terrace near the sea, as empty and poignant a place as one of Antonioni's desolate streets. Stillness and frenzy oscillate in almost musical rhythm. Feverishly, Bauby imagines the history of the hospital, with the Empress Eugénie visiting tubercular children and the young Nijinsky, temporarily rehearsing there, leaping through the air. The associations are wild and free, yet nothing feels arbitrary or garish (one thinks of the visionary episodes in silent film rather than of Fellini). We need this extravagant beauty; we deserve it. The diving bell of the title refers to a recurring shot of Bauby trapped inside ancient deep-sea equipment, helplessly sinking in water. The butterfly is his mind and, of course, the cinema itself, which can go anywhere it wants.

A literary man working for a commercial magazine, Bauby, we gather, is *not* a very nice guy. Or, rather, in the scenes from the past, he comes off as full of life, a lover, a power in the fashion and magazine worlds but not particularly courageous or loyal. Mathieu Amalric has a round face and slightly bulging eyes, and an easy way of swinging his body through a room; he's avid, restless—not handsome, exactly, but an actor with a sexual presence. Sometime before his illness, Bauby left the beautiful, soft-voiced Céline (Emmanuelle Seigner), the mother of his children, in favor of a big-boned, exotic, and demanding girlfriend, Inès (Agathe de La Fontaine). In the hospital, he longs for Inès, but it's Céline, a wife in all but name, who comes to visit and stays. This mild-tempered woman, we realize with a pang, is paralyzed in her own way—she's hopelessly in love with her man even though he finds her a little dull. Both the doctors and the therapists know that Bauby's recovery depends on keeping his libido alive, and Schnabel brazenly dramatizes the treatment as an exchange in which eros and caring become inextricable. The physical therapist (Olatz Lopez Garmendia, Schnabel's wife) teaches Bauby to swallow by twirling her tongue, and the speech therapist (Marie-Josée Croze), a more earnest sort,

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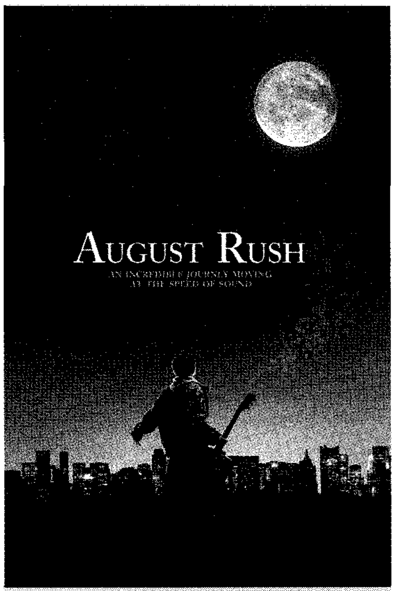
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A charismatic young Irish guitarist and a sheltered young American cellist have a chance encounter one magical night in New York's Washington Square but are soon torn apart, leaving an infant, orphaned by circumstance. Years later, the child uses his remarkable musical talent to seek the parents from whom he was separated at birth.

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PG

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flirts with her patient morally. She runs through the alphabet in the order of letters most frequently used in French, and Bauby blinks when he wants to choose a letter. After a while, the therapist anticipates his words from the initial letter, and she becomes enraged when his first sentence announces his desire to die. Her demand for a retraction is itself a complete drama of rejection, hurt feelings, and renewed adoration.

Bauby seems to attract the love of religious women who pray for a miracle to save him, but, a freethinker, and anticlerical in a long French tradition, he will have none of it. A beefy attendant cradling his slack, naked body in the hospital's pool suggests Mary holding the crucified Jesus, but Bauby will rise again only in art: the miracle this movie celebrates is his ability to compose his book. Still, "The Diving Bell" surges toward redemption—a man fully realizing his humanity only when mobility and sexuality have been taken away. Imperially free and generous as Schnabel's work is, the imagery—medical, erotic, religious—hangs together with enormous power. The birth of Bauby's soul feels like nothing less than the rebirth of the cinema.

"The Savages," a lesser affair, but still vital, honest, and engaging, is about a saturnine theatre professor (Philip Seymour Hoffman) who specializes in the most acidulous of twentieth-century artists, Bertolt Brecht, and his kid sister (Laura Linney), an unproduced playwright who gets by with temp jobs, stealing from office supply rooms, and hustling for grants. The two, on either side of forty, have essentially lived as orphans from the beginning—their mom fled, and their dad (Philip Bosco) was abusive and distant. Unresolved in everything that matters, brother and sister, to their chagrin, find themselves in charge of the nasty, unreachable old man in his final days. The movie, however, is less interested in their relation to him than in their cranky elbowing of each other. Written and directed by Tamara Jenkins, "The Savages" asks whether two people who have never been loved can possibly bring themselves to value anyone else, or even themselves. The professor prides himself on living without any illusions at all (one of the greatest of vanities), and Hoffman, roughening his voice, launches into some blistering tirades, as if he alone were in possession of the truth. The playwright, eager for approval, tells little lies to gain temporary advantage, and Linney, grinning like a teen-ager over her fibs, does her naughtiest, most secretive work yet. The two great actors lead us toward a tentatively happy conclusion, in which life, to their mutual surprise, does manage to stumble on. ♦

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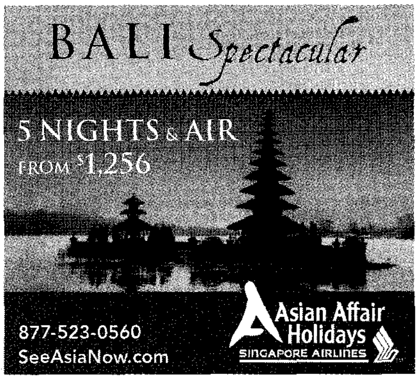
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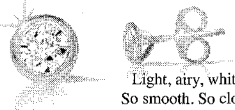
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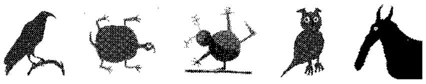

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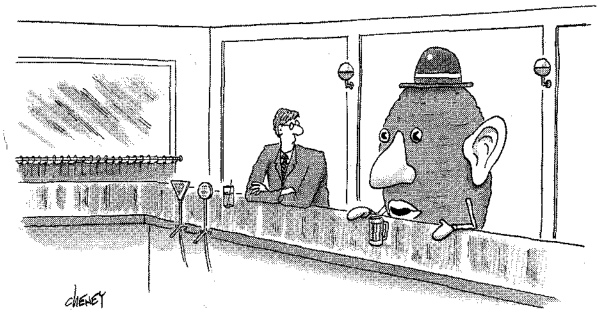
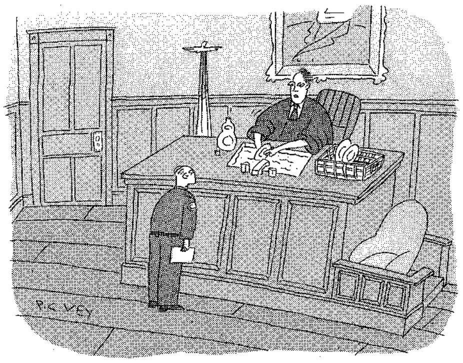
CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Mike Twohy, must be received by Sunday, December 2nd. Finalists in the November 19th contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the December 17th issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"If I start to drink too much, just pull off my lips."
Lynn Tudor, New York City



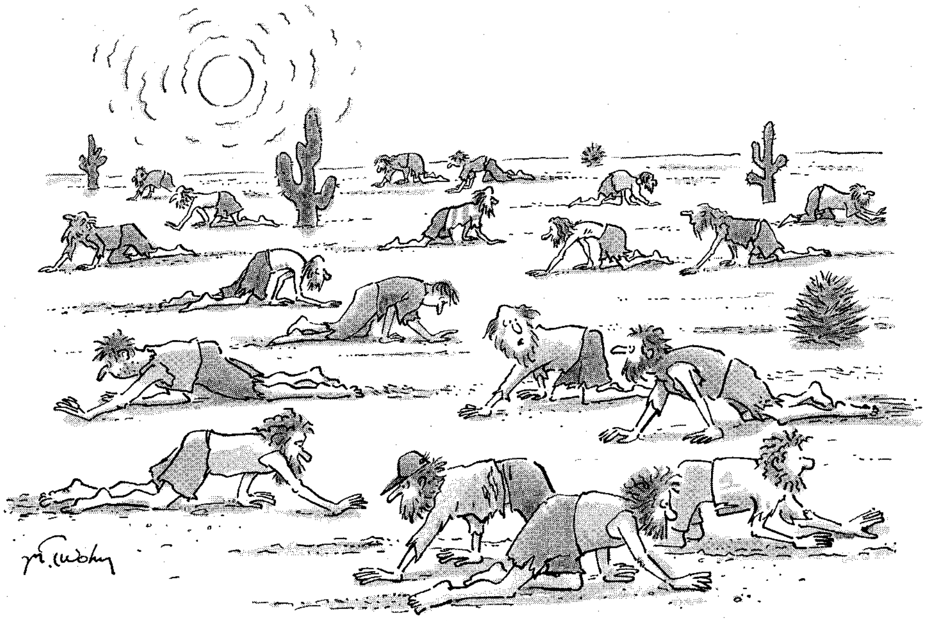
THE FINALISTS

"Yeah, well, it got me through college and law school, and it'll get me through here, too."
William Manning, Wichita, Kans.

"If the jury needs another day, they're using paper plates tomorrow."
Emily Anhalt, Guilford, Conn.

"I wish they'd let us wear short-sleeved robes."
Dean Kahn, Bellingham, Wash.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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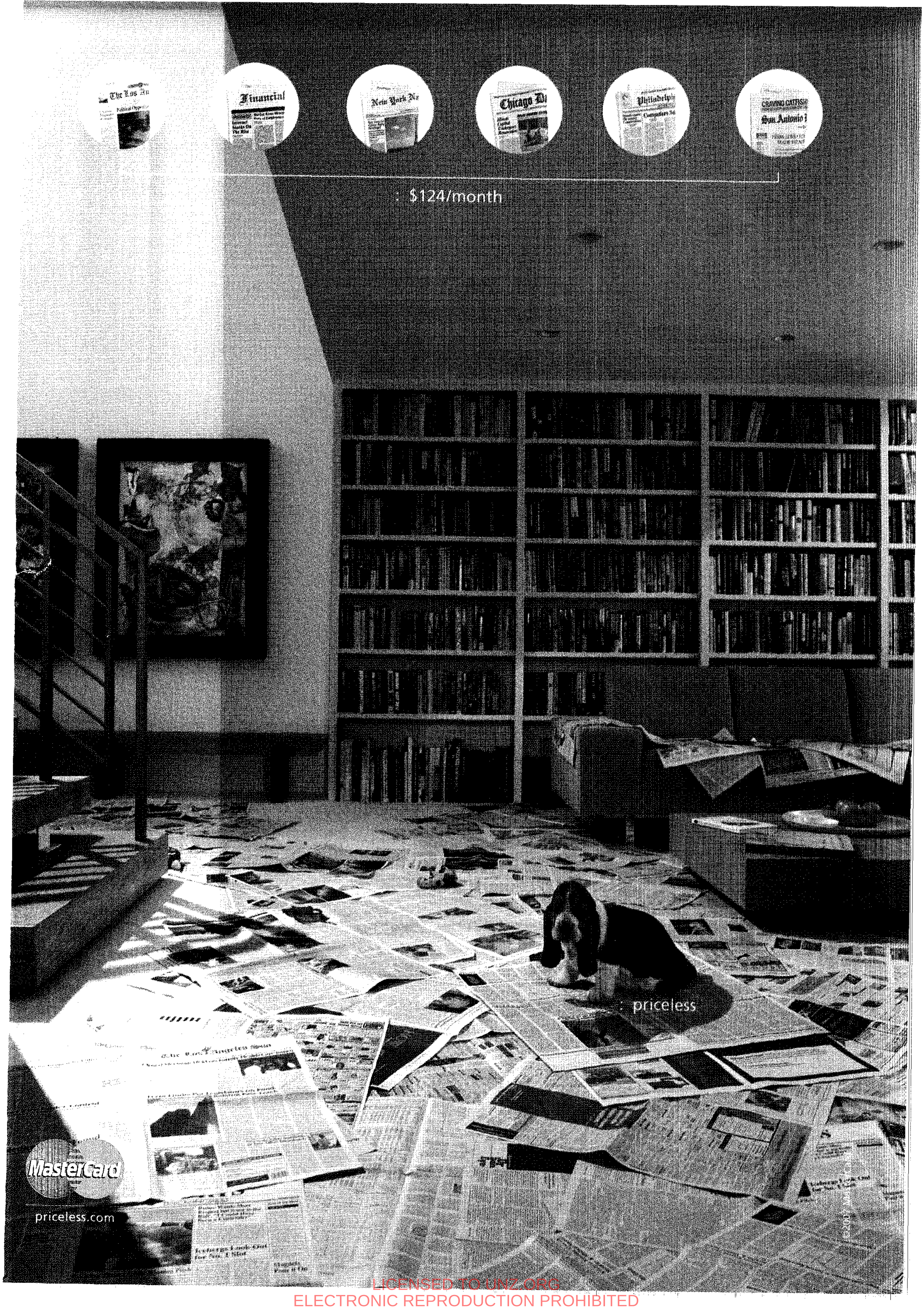
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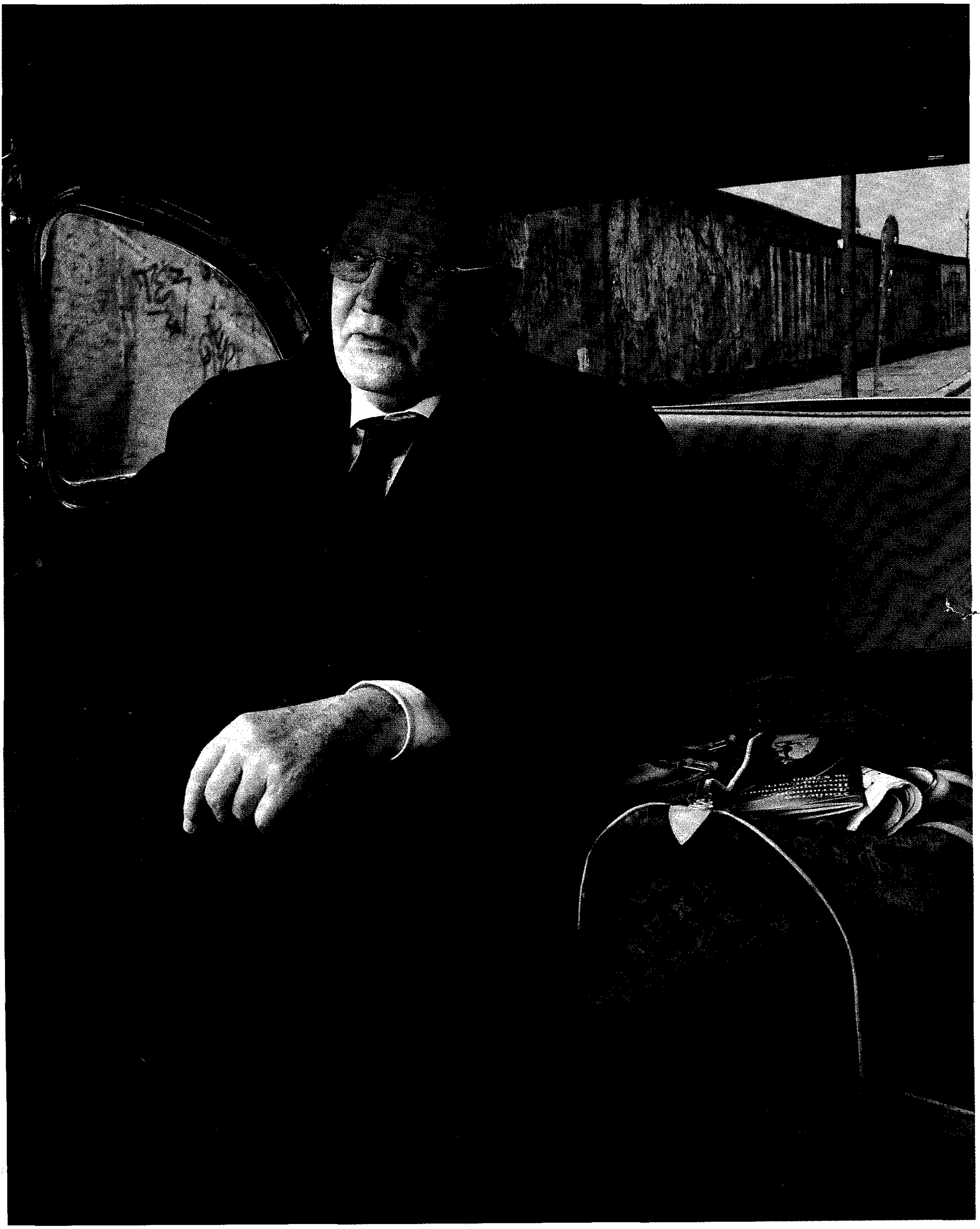

A journey brings us face to face with ourselves.
Berlin Wall. Returning from a conference.

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